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Palestinian Affairs

PLO Adviser Says Delegation To Participate in 11th Round

TA1908150893 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 19 Aug 93 pp 1, 15

[Text] Jerusalem—Dr. Hasan 'Abd-al-Rahman, adviser to the Palestinian negotiating delegation and the PLO's representative in Canada, who is currently in the country, has said that the Palestinian delegation has announced that it will participate in the upcoming round of talks in Washington out of a desire to advance the peace process and promote the talks. This will be done in order to reach a just and comprehensive peace that ensures the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including the establishment of their independent state, alongside the State of Israel.

'Abd-al-Rahman added: We do not doubt Israel's current peaceful intentions, but intentions alone are not enough; there is need for action.

'Abd-al-Shafi Rejects 'Gaza-Jericho First' Option

TA1908152393 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 19 Aug 93 pp 1, 15

[Excerpt] Ramallah, QUDS PRESS—A senior Palestinian negotiator has rejected Israel's proposal to set up test areas for the autonomy that is expected to be implemented in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres had presented a plan to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that included the establishment of two test units in Gaza and Jericho to explore the benefit of autonomy for Israel and gauge the Palestinians' commitment to the implementation process.

Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, head of the Palestinian side to the peace talks, has said that Israel's proposal in this respect will not be accepted unless a comprehensive agreement compatible with the terms of reference of peace—Resolution 242—is reached.

In a statement to QUDS PRESS, 'Abd-al-Shafi added: I believe that on this issue we are speaking according to our own perception, and the Israelis according to theirs.

'Abd-al-Shafi considered that the Israeli minister's remarks reveal an ambiguous Israeli stance regarding the future of the peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track. He added that those remarks underscore that the occupation will still remain in the autonomy areas.

'Abd-al-Shafi emphasized that the "Gaza-Jericho first" option cannot be applied without reaching a comprehensive agreement that implements the various stages. He said: The Palestinian side cannot divide an agreement, whereby we say Gaza first, because this gives Israel the liberty to select sections from the rest of the agreement. This is unacceptable to the Palestinians. [passage omitted]

PLO's al-Najjab on Tunis Meetings, Peace Process

JN1908145793 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 19 Aug 93 p 23

["Text" of interview with PLO Executive Committee member Sulayman al-Najjab by 'Awdah 'Awdah in Amman; date not given]

[Text] ['Awdah] Invitations have been issued for the 11th round of Arab-Israeli peace talks, which is set to convene toward the end of this month. Do you think that Christopher's recent tour of the region has helped remove the obstacles on the Palestinian track of the negotiations?

[Al-Najjab] No. I don't think so. This tour may have further complicated the negotiations. The Palestinians are now presented with two things: the so-called U.S. declaration of principles, and the early empowerment proposal, which envisages the transfer of some service and administrative functions to Palestinians. These two things are steering the negotiating process away from its main objective, which is the implementation of all the provisions and articles enshrined in Resolution 242. Moreover, these two things will also turn the interim period into a permanent phase after the final phase is divided into endless interim phases.

['Awdah] Is the Gaza-Jericho proposal part of this endeavor?

[Al-Najjab] Yes. According to the Israelis, this proposal provides for the implementation of autonomy, or for early empowerment in Gaza and Jericho first. It is worth noting that the Israelis endorsed the implementation of autonomy in all occupied territories, with the exception of Jerusalem and settlements, at the outset of the negotiations. As is well known, the Gaza-Jericho proposal has neither been discussed nor endorsed at any meeting of the PLO Executive Committee.

['Awdah] If the Gaza-Jericho proposal has not been endorsed by the PLO Executive Committee, who endorsed it then?

[Al-Najjab] This proposal first surfaced in a Palestinian reply to the U.S. draft declaration of principles delivered to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. This proposal was designed to "disengage troops" and facilitate full empowerment in these two areas in the occupied territories. No linkage was envisaged then between these two areas and other occupied territories.

What is required is an Israeli commitment to withdraw from the territories it occupied in 1967. Once such a commitment is obtained, then withdrawal could be scheduled within the context of a specific timeframe, not

to exceed the duration of the transitional phase. Withdrawal from Gaza, Jericho, or any other area would then be the start of Israel withdrawal from the occupied territories.

['Awdah] This means that there are still outstanding differences on the Palestinian negotiating strategy within the Palestinian leadership?

[Al-Najjab] Yes, the hopes pinned on the Tunis meetings regarding the endorsement of an agreed negotiating strategy have not been realized. The issue has been left to be decided by a meeting of the leadership and the peace talks negotiators on the eve of the 11th round of talks. Besides, the organizational plan that is meant to address the shortcomings and excesses in the Palestinian leadership's performance, and in the relationship between the leadership and the negotiators, has not been formulated, although there is a need to formulate such plan as soon as possible.

['Awdah] As a PLO Executive Committee member, have you taken part in any Palestinian-Israeli meetings involving Israeli officials?

[Al-Najjab] No. I have not taken part in such meetings, even though I am, in principle, willing to take part in such meetings. The holding of such meetings hinges on the Israeli side, which has failed to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

['Awdah] Of late, there has been a lot of talk about meetings between Palestinian officials, including, among others, [PLO Executive Committee member] Mahmud Darwish, and Israeli officials.

[Al-Najjab] I have not heard anything from brother Mahmud Darwish about the meeting he held with Israeli Minister Shulamit Aloni. However, it is an established fact that Mrs. Aloni met with leading Palestinian figures. But this was before she became a minister in the current Israeli Government.

['Awdah] But it seems that Israel is getting closer to a recognition of the PLO.

[Al-Najjab] I do not think so, although Israel has no choice but to do so.

The current Israeli Government is well aware that it is negotiating with the PLO through the delegation it designated, that this delegation fully espouses the Palestinian peace program endorsed by the Palestine National Council, and that this delegation works to implement this program through the negotiations.

The Israelis are evading official recognition of the PLO, because they do not want to recognize the Palestinian people and their rights, as enshrined in the resolutions of international legitimacy. The PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the agency authorized to struggle to ensure the restoration of these rights. We must beware of Israeli bargaining, and realize that Israel is demanding a price for dealing with the PLO. In return for direct dealings with the PLO, Israel wants the PLO to renounce the Palestinian people's national rights. Likewise, it wants the negotiations to be exclusively focused on the autonomy plan. Moreover, it wants the PLO to guarantee the implementation of the agreement that could be reached in this regard.

['Awdah] It is clear that negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli track are facing a deadlock. In your opinion, it is impossible to break this deadlock through either the Israeli [as received] declaration of principles, the early empowerment proposal, or through talk of possible Israeli-PLO meetings. Is there a way out of this deadlock?

[Al-Najjab] The current Israeli position, as well as U.S. support for this position, are to blame for this deadlock. The Rabin government has brushed aside its peace program and fully espoused the Likud Party's program, which the Labor Party criticized and held responsible for lack of progress in the peace talks when it was in the opposition.

This deadlock in the peace talks can be broken only when Israel commits itself to work to achieve the objective of the negotiations, as spelled out at the Madrid conference; namely, the implementation of all provisions of Resolution 242, and when Israel ends its attempts to tamper with the interim phase, which was designed primarily to facilitate the withdrawal of Israeli troops from territories they have occupied for 25 years. Right now, there is an urgent need to establish a link between the interim phase, and the arrangements that will be introduced in this phase, on the one hand, and the final status solution on the other. Such linkage should not only determine the timeframe entailed; it must also schedule Israeli administrative, security, legislative, and military withdrawals from the occupied territories within the five-year timeframe.

['Awdah] What do you have to say to people, including Palestinian officials and PLO Executive Committee members, who are saying that the solution will be achieved before the end of this year, whether we like it or not?

[Al-Najjab] The solution envisaged by these people is a U.S.-styled solution. As far as I am concerned, I have faith in our Palestinian people's ability to confront and thwart such a solution. The negotiations only constitute a new vehicle for our struggle against the Israeli enemy. We might fail to extricate our rights from this enemy through negotiations, but we are nevertheless capable of thwarting any solution that does not guarantee the restoration of our rights.

['Awdah] How can this apparently approved U.S. solution be foiled?

[Al-Najjab] The U.S. solution is not a fate imposed on us. We have to distinguish between our people's ambition to reach a peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict and their rejection of any sort of a solution. This fact should be taken into consideration by all concerned about the current peace process. What is important is to

work hard to mobilize all the capabilities of the Palestinian people to defend their national rights and renounce any differences among the Palestinian parties. Although we are unable to agree on everything we want, we can agree on confronting and rejecting what we do not want.

['Awdah] Supporting the Palestinian position requires an Arab position. So, what is expected from the Arabs?

[Al-Najjab] All Arab countries should stick to the resolutions adopted unanimously by the Arab countries on the Arab-Israeli conflict and its essence, the Palestine question. Within the framework of coordination between the five Arab parties that participate in the bilateral negotiations, there is a commitment to a position that supports the Palestinian people's rights, and an adherence to a comprehensive solution that guarantees full implementation of Resolution 242, particularly withdrawal from the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including holy Jerusalem, solving the problem of the Palestinian refugees, and securing the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

There is also a joint commitment by the Arab parties to the multilateral negotiations not to lift the boycott on Israel and not to normalize relations with it before it recognizes the Arab and Palestinian rights as stated in the relevant resolutions. What is important is to stick firmly to these positions and to confront the pressures exerted on all of us with the aim of driving us away from the Arab resolutions that had been unanimously adopted.

['Awdah] Finally, how can the PLO emerge from its current difficult financial condition?

[Al-Najjab] First of all, this requires continuous efforts with sisterly Arab states to resume their assistance to our people, martyrs, prisoners, and the sons of our people in the occupied territories who are facing an Israeli siege designed to starve them. There is no justification for evading this duty, whatever the political differences might be. This situation also urges the Executive Committee to adopt a studied austerity plan that takes into consideration what is important and what is less important, and that stops unjustified spending. The formation of a Palestinian investigation committee should be expedited to investigate reports about financial corruption in certain Palestinian establishments. The efforts of this committee are very important in order to bolster confidence between the Palestinian people and their leadership, to put an end to tendentious rumors, and to put things right. This will motivate rich Palestinians to play their role in securing the needs of the Palestinian national struggle in order to safeguard the independence of the national Palestinian decision.

Fatah Representative Says Israel, U.S. Hindering Peace

NC2008122093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1023 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] Cairo, 20 Aug (MENA)—Zuhdi al-Qidrah, Fatah representative in Cairo, said today that the Israeli occupation forces' new recourse to demolishing the houses of unarmed civilians in Gaza and the announcement of a planned new settlement there prove that Israel is continuing its attempt to ruin the peace process.

Al-Qidrah added: This Israeli position will cast a dark shadow over the peace operation. The United States has a responsibility to make Israel halt its terrorist, repressive acts against the Palestinians and respect human rights. It must also refrain from creating new faits accomplis because they contradict the principles of the peace process.

The Palestinian official blamed both Israel and the United States for hindering the peace negotiations.

PNC Deputy Speaker on Possibility of Session

JN1908111193 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 19 Aug 93 pp 32, 22

[By Tawfiq 'Abid]

[Text] Taysir Qubba'ah, second deputy speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC], has said that there are no current plans to increase the number of PNC or PLO Central Council members.

He added: So far, the responsible bodies within the PNC and the PLO Executive Committee have decided not to discuss this issue or announce the names of those who represent the West Bank and Gaza Strip within the PNC for security reasons.

PLO officials yesterday announced that the PLO is seeking to expand membership in the PNC and the PLO Central Council. Moreover, in October 1992, the Palestinian president stated that he would announce the names of PNC members from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. At that time, however, he received more than 15 letters from Arab officials, friends, and foreign figures, objecting to the decision and warning against making such a move, saying it would obstruct the peace process.

Answering a question by AL-DUSTUR, Qubba'ah said that the names of the representatives from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who number between 120 and 180 members, may be announced depending on future political developments. However, he added, this depends on the possibility of holding a PNC session. It is currently difficult to hold sessions because there aren't any Arab capitals willing to host the meetings and because of the current financial situation of the PLO.

Qubba'ah continued to say: Indeed, we really do need to hold a PNC session to review our policies and Palestinian affairs, especially the Madrid-Washington course.

It is worth noting that PNC bylaws and regulations stipulate the holding of an annual session. However, there are reasons, such as the lack of a venue, that justify postponing such a session for a few years.

On developments in the comprehensive national dialogue, Qubba'ah said: So far, there are ongoing bilateral, trilateral, and quadrilateral discussions among organizations from inside and outside the occupied territories, especially from Ramallah, Nabulus, and Jerusalem with the participation of independent national figures. These discussions are aimed at creating suitable circumstances in order to render dialogue a success.

Qubba'ah said that during a tour of Syria and Lebanon, he held contacts with both representatives of Palestinian factions and independent figures to discuss ways to help this dialogue succeed and to discuss the ramifications of this dialogue. He said he reached the conclusion that everyone feels that dialogue is the only way and that it is one of the three conditions—including increasing national unity and reorganizing the Palestinian house, reinforcing and eliminating all flaws in the intifadah, and abiding by international legitimacy—that must be fulfilled in order to confront the liquidation of the Palestinian cause.

In terms of holding a PLO Central Council session at the end of this month, Qubba'ah said this idea is out of the question before a comprehensive national dialogue is held. The PLO Central Council will not be convened despite a previous PLO Executive Committee decision to facilitate procedures in order to hold this session.

PLO Executive Committee Member Resigns in Protest

NC2008091093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0853 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] Tunis, 20 Aug (MENA)—The well-known Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish has resigned from the PLO Executive Committee.

In a statement to the MENA correspondent in Tunis, Darwish said that he submitted his resignation in writing to Palestinian President and PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat to protest the PLO stand on the peace negotiations.

Mahmud Darwish is an independent member of the committee and chairs the PLO's Higher Cultural Council.

'Uncertainties' Surround Investment Conference

JN1908112893 Amman THE STAR in English 19-25 Aug 93 pp 1, 2

[By STAR staff writer Bilal Hijjawi]

[Text] Uncertainties still envelope the much talked about Jerusalem Palestinian Investment Conference. Participants close to the organizers could only speculate about its launch date and location. Delayed twice, organizers, including Palestinian peace team members Mr. Faysal al-Husayni, Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi and Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi among others, are now aiming to hold the conference between 10 and 15 October in occupied Jerusalem.

A number of Palestinian/Jordanian businessmen agree that the decision to hold the conference in Jerusalem is vital to its success. "I believe that Arabs should be moving positively into asserting their presence in Jerusalem through such activities," Mr. Nidal Sukhtian, general manager of the Sukhtian Group and regional coordinator of the Arab American Anti Discrimination Committee (ADC) chapter in Jordan told THE STAR. "Its an act of assertiveness."

Mr. Sukhtian, who is close to the organizing committee, said that Arabs should make it clear to all sides that a proposed Palestinian state will have its administration headquartered in Jerusalem. "Our presence there has been deeply eroded because of the pervasive Jewish cultural and economic presence and settlement; this conference is one way of fighting back," said Mr. Sukhtian. He explained that this step is vital for cementing the economic concept, which predicates an urgent need to develop an investment base on which the economy of the future state of Palestine is to be based. "Investments will come, yet this is not the only thing expected to come out...Israel has taken hundreds of billions of dollars from the West to establish their country over ours illegally. We need as much in compensation to balance out the act of occupation," said Mr. Sukhtian. "The world should invest in a corrective action including Israel itself."

A conference document circulating among possible participants has projected over $218,000 as costs for holding the six-day conference, which will be covered by participants. Those inside the territories will be charged an admission fees equalling $1000, while diaspora Palestinians will pay $2000. Secondly, and in case of insufficient funds, we would ask for Arab and other international support," [no opening quotation marks as published] read the agenda paper.

The promised services and information available to participants does put forward a worthwhile reward: An expert committee is to prepare and furnish a draft investment law, tax system, feasibility studies and other documents to participants. Furthermore, the committee promised to supply regular information on developments in the local economy and inform on the recommendations suggested by the conference.

[Text] However, controversy over the venue of the conference continues to trouble the organizers. "A committee is to meet in Amman deliberate on whether to

convene the conference in Jerusalem or Amman," a high ranking source at the Palestinian Embassy in Amman told THE STAR.

However, a number of Palestinian businessmen interviewed by THE STAR, voiced concern over how Arab countries would interpret the Jerusalem venue. "We cannot become the bridge on which other Arab investors cross in order to invest in Israel before normalization under a just peace," the embassy source said.

The source denied official PLO participation at any level and said that the conference is a private sector concern dedicated to economic issues. However, the source suggested that the private sector should operate within its known framework without infringing on political issues. "Otherwise, the organizers would have to coordinate with the PLO," concluded the embassy official.

"This is not so," said Mr. Labib Qamhawi, a businessman in Jordan and an expert on Palestinian affairs. "What is being proposed now as an economy conference is purely political. It is part of the normalization process, part of funding peace and the Palestinian option to opt for self government," he explained. "By saying this, I'm not trying to minimize or undermine the work of others, but what is being proposed as a great achievement, is not in reality," Mr. Qamhawi said. "There was never a decision against the inflow of investments into the territories. At one point, we were against a Western proposal to improve the quality of life in the territories because the idea was to make occupation acceptable to the people under it."

Other Palestinian businessmen, who received invitations to participate, became less enthusiastic when the possibility of holding the conference in Amman instead was proposed to them. "The subject is Jerusalem and the agenda is investments in the Palestine state," said Mr. Munir 'Atallah, a successful international businessman residing Jordan and a member of the conference's support committee. Mr. 'Atallah explained that the conference's location in Jerusalem could be interpreted as a de facto recognition of Palestinian rights in Jerusalem. "I've been away from the city for 17 years and this conference would help us understand the changing face of the territories," he said.

But how attractive are the Occupied Territories to investors?

"The current ruler of the city is an economist by profession and he knows that this conference would positively contribute to soothing the Intifadah," Mr. 'Atallah told THE STAR. "In his mind, a hungry man inflames it and the happy one doesn't. The main obstacles to an investor is the high income tax." He added that investments coming into the West Bank and Gaza would reduce emigration and keep people inside, "Investment opportunities are present there, especially in the service sector, such as tourism," he added.

Mr. Sukhtian said that he has learned of an existing fear that substantial Jordanian capital flight may follow should Jordanian capital be allowed to move freely across the Jordan River. "People who believe that investments in peace times would target one nation leaving others are paranoid at best," he said. He explained that under peace, the investment atmosphere will be a magnet and the "region as a whole stands to gain substantially."

Algeria

Fires Set To Destroy Food Stores

LD1808155293 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Aug 93

[Text] It has been learned from security sources in Blida that about 600 tonnes of flour were criminally destroyed by fires set by an unknown group at about 0100 today.

The operation was carried out in Ben Badis warehouse, which belongs to SEMPAC [expansion unknown] enterprise in Blida.

The same sources added that a similar fire was aimed yesterday at two trucks loaded with 8 tonnes of oil and 3 tonnes of sugar in the town of Ain Kercha, Oum El Bouaghi province.

Egypt

Further Reportage on Attempted Assassination of al-Alfi

Islamic Jihad Claims Responsibility

NC2008085893 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0830 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] The Islamic Jihad Organization [IJO] in Egypt has claimed responsibility for the assassination attempt against Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi of the Egyptian regime, the regime that fights Islam and implements U.S. and Israeli policy in the region.

An IJO statement said that the 'Isam al-Qamari group, led by heroes Nazih Nushi and Tariq Hasan, carried out the attack against the interior minister's motorcade.

The statement mourned martyrs Nushi and Hasan, pledging to avenge them and all the martyrs of Islam whose blood has been shed by Israel's agents, the tyrants of Egypt.

The statement called on all mujahidin everywhere as well as those in Egyptian jails to stay on the jihad road and to aim their weapons at the renegade regime until the state of Islam is established. It also called on all Islamic factions to avenge any harm that affects Muslim scholars and to unite in one trench against the leaders of atheism.

Al-Alfi Says No Truce With 'Infidels'

NC2008071993 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0515 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Dispatch from Paris correspondent Andre 'Aziz Muhawij]

[Text] Egyptian Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi has stressed that those who carried out the explosions in Cairo and attempted to assassinate him have been identified by Egyptian authorities less than two days after the incidents. He added that he is determined to fight the infidels, as he described them, and not to submit to them. In a telephone interview with al-Alfi in the Military Hospital in Cairo where he is being treated, the minister stressed that the Egyptian people reject these violent acts and described those behind them:

[Begin recording] [Al-Alfi] These people are not Muslims. They are infidels. Islam is a religion of mercy and love and never advocates violence. These are actions of evil and cowardly people. All these actions are haphazard ones that signal their throes of death. The people are against them and, God willing, will destroy them soon.

[Muhawij] The government has taken several measures but it appears not to have succeeded. The trial of the Islamists last week ended with sentences that were not very harsh. Is this an attempt by the authorities to open up to this trend?

[Al-Alfi] No, never. There will be no laxity and no truce with them.

[Muhawij] Do you have any evidence about those behind this operation?

[Al-Alfi] The security authorities have already obtained information during the investigations and will discover more, God willing, [words indistinct].

[Muhawij] Do you regard the current trend in Egypt as the same one that is hitting Algeria? Are there links between these operations?

[Al-Alfi] There is no doubt that some of these terrorists are abroad and have connections with each other. [passage indistinct] [end recording]

Minister al-Alfi also stressed that one of the perpetrators of the attack who was killed was involved in the assassination of former People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Rif'at al-Mahjub. He said that the state is fortifying Egyptian society by enlightening youths about the dangers of this wave and by tackling the economic and social problems.

Al-Alfi Departs for Switzerland

NC2008063993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0602 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] Cairo, 20 Aug (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi—who was the target of an unsuccessful assassination attempt while on his way to his office on al-Shaykh Rayhan Street in al-Tahrir Square in Cairo two days ago—left Cairo for Geneva, Switzerland, this morning where he will receive medical treatment. Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi yesterday issued a decision on the interior minister's travel to Switzerland.

Security Source Details Attack

NC1908180393 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1716 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Cairo, 19 Aug (MENA)—A responsible security source has ruled out that the terrorists who mounted a failed assassination attempt on Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi yesterday used a remote control [preceding two words in English] detonator in triggering the blast.

In a statement to MENA today, the source said that the terrorists detonated the explosive charge manually. They wired the explosive charge, which was placed on the motorcycle, with the motorcycle's battery, having received a signal from an accomplice that the interior minister's motorcade was approaching.

The source said that the terrorists made a mistake in connecting the explosive charge to the battery, which caused the bomb to go off while the two terrorists were still close to the motorcycle.

Forensic evidence, the source added, shows that the terrorist who was blown up at the site of the blast was nearer to the bomb than the second terrorist, who was standing by a nearby refreshment stand.

The source said that it is likely that more than four people were involved in the attack. The al-Jihad Organization tends to use groups comprising four to six members in its attacks. Every man of the group would have a definite role in the operation, the source said, adding that it is likely that a getaway car was also parked near the site of the operation.

The source said that police are trying to identify the terrorist who was killed immediately by the blast [as received]. The second terrorist, Nazih Nushi Rashid, died today at Qasr al-'Ayni Hospital. Police are also searching for the other terrorists who took part in the operation.

Attack Termed 'Desperate Terrorist Attempt'

NC1908182793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1720 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Tripoli, 19 Aug (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has affirmed that the attack on Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi was a desperate terrorist attempt after the siege on the terrorists was tightened. The evidence for this is the fact that one of the terrorists arrested in the incident was wanted for five such attacks. He pointed out that this incident comes at a time when everyone has noticed terrorism beginning to ebb.

Mubarak said in a statement to the chairmen of the boards and chief editors of Egyptian newspapers who accompanied him on his visit to Libya that there is consensus of opinion that dialogue with these terrorist elements is a useless process because they are desperate and do not live in the real world. They need to be taken to account and punished legally.

In his statement, Mubarak refused to comment on the sentences issued in the [assassinated former People's Assembly Speaker] Rif'at al-Mahjub case. He affirmed that he holds the judiciary in very high esteem and appreciates their efforts.

The president said that the process of ratifying the sentences is a legal process taken on by a technical office consisting of judges and legal experts. The military ruler does not issue a decision ratifying or not ratifying sentences on a whim. He affirmed that he does not have a preconceived opinion on these sentences. The opinion of the committee is referred to the military ruler or whoever he appoints as his deputy. The background material for this opinion is also submitted. This opinion could also be reviewed by another group to confirm the accuracy and correctness of the committee's decision to meet all the legal aspects and requirements for justice.

Answering a question on his talks with Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution, President Mubarak said a big part of this visit concentrated on bolstering joint cooperation between the two countries.

Answering a question on developments in the Lockerbie crisis, he said that sanctions on Libya or tightening these sanctions will not solve the problem. He pointed out that his contacts with all parties continue to find a solution satisfying all sides.

Muslim Brotherhood Denounces Attack

NC1908153893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1425 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Cairo, 19 Aug (MENA)—The Muslim Brotherhood has strongly condemned yesterday's attack on Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi.

Muhammad Hamid Abu-al-Nasr, general guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, issued a statement today saying that this attack—in which four were killed, the minister and 15 others were wounded, and considerable damage to property incurred—betrays an excessive disregard for life and property that cannot be justified by any religion, creed, law, or sense of humanity.

The Brotherhood's statement says that these criminal acts are unprecedented and considers this attack one of great evil. The statement adds that there is no doubt that murder, bloodshed, and meddling with society's security and the nation's future cannot in any way be seen as means for upholding what is right and safeguarding justice and stability. Such attacks lead only to chaos and loss of security and safety.

Murder, the statement says, is a cardinal sin in Islam, second only to polytheism. "That if anyone slew a person, unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land, it would be as if he slew the whole people. And if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people." [Koranic verse]

As we strongly denounce this and any similar incident and oppose it with all our capabilities, we call on the entire nation to stand up to its perpetrators and foil their designs.

Radio Urges Unity Against Terrorism

NC1908174193 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Ahmad al-Qasir commentary: "Egypt's People Reject the Logic of Terrorism and the Method of Dialogue Through Bullets"]

[Text] We tell anyone who believes in any treacherous attempt to assassinate a certain political personality, place a bomb or explosive device in a public place to cause panic and kill innocent people—women, children, and the elderly—or fire indiscriminately at police and tourists, that he is wrong. Whoever believes that such individual terrorist acts can distort the image of peace-loving Egyptian society or affect the stability and security of Egypt is completely wrong.

Therefore, these criminal acts, committed by a misguided group of lawbreakers, are strange to Egyptian society, which declared before the world that it rejects them and proceeded to confront them with all its might, as happened recently in some Cairo districts. The reason for this is clear to all Egypt's sons, who have realized that these criminal acts target an entire people and homeland. The objective is to ruin all their accomplishments in various fields, hamper the course of loyal national action toward economic reform, and overcome the accumulations of the past to provide a dignified life for Egypt's sons.

The peace-loving Egyptian people reject the logic of terrorism that some groups are attempting to impose on us. They also strongly reject dialogue through bullets, which contradicts the atmosphere of democracy and freedom we have been experiencing for some years now that allows any citizen to express his opinion freely. But a citizen is expected to do so through the legal channels and constitutional establishments.

Such terrorist acts will never intimidate the Egyptian people, who care about their homeland and achievements. The opposite is true. They will make these people more determined to confront this perverse phenomenon that violates morality and religion. The people of Egypt will not forget the martyrs from among the civilians and innocent people who have been the victims of terrorism and treachery without committing any crime. Unfortunately, they happened to be passing by the area where the terrorists placed their fatal explosive devices. In addition, the martyrs among the police force who are victims of this black terrorism are our brothers and sons who protect the security of the homeland and the citizens.

The recent terrorist acts have revealed to the entire nation the true motives of the minority that has diverged from the national consensus and exposed the fake slogans they hide behind. It has now become necessary for the people to join hands with their leaders and the police force to confront this joint danger that wants to assassinate Egypt itself. Every citizen must ask himself: What has Egypt gained from this criminal phenomenon? Hasn't tourism been affected, as has our huge income from tourism in hard currency? Hasn't the source of income of hundreds of thousands of citizens who work in the field of tourism been affected? Hasn't the blood of innocent civilians been shed unjustly? Haven't the enemies of Egypt exploited these terrorist acts to distort its image abroad? Does terrorism want to halt the progress of economic reform so that we suffer the same tribulations as the people of the former Soviet Union and East Europe? Will the people of Egypt stand by and watch all these crimes being committed against them?

Let us all take action—leadership, government and people—to confront this terrorist group and eradicate the roots of terrorism. Egypt will always be a safe and stable place, thanks to the awareness of its loyal people.

Mubarak Views al-Sallum Border Post Plans Upon Return

NC1908150793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1405 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Al-Sallum, 19 Aug (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak and his delegation returned to the homeland this afternoon after a two-day visit to the Libyan Jamahiriyah.

Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said that President Mubarak took a look at the project for developing the al-Sallum border post at the western gate between Egypt and Libya based on a comprehensive and integrated project that will facilitate the flow of passengers and all types of trucks.

In a statement to MENA, he said that the development project will increase the post's potential eight-fold. Full facilities will be established and placed under the joint supervision of Egypt and Libya.

Al-Sharif added that President Mubarak saw the sketches of the project and issued his directives on expanding it. He took into consideration future developments and the flow of traffic from the Arab Maghreb. He instructed that the project should be finished some time within the next 10 months to one year.

Before Mubarak left the al-Sallum post, he issued instructions to the police department not to charge the Libyan brothers any fees and to treat them as they would Egyptians.

Defense Minister General Muhammad Husayn Tantawi, Matruh Governor Muhammad Zahir 'Abd-al-Rahman, Assistant Foreign Minister Major General Faruq 'Ubayd, and Matruh's security chief received Mubarak on his arrival at the al-Sallum post.

Mubarak then flew by helicopter from the landing pad at al-Sallum to Sidi Barrani Airfield, where he boarded a plane back to Cairo.

Radio Views Tripoli Talks, Says Final Decision Libya's

NC1808182793 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 18 Aug 93

['Atif 'Umar commentary: "The Egyptian-Libyan Summit Talks Embody Egypt's Pan-Arab Role"]

[Text] The talks being held in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, between President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution, indeed embody the role Egypt has undertaken over its long history toward its brother Arabs, Muslims, and Africans.

It is no exaggeration to say that the policy Egypt adopted for many years has not changed. It has not changed because it represents the fixed, permanent, and continuous approach adopted by every leader of the great Egyptian people. We have to say that this policy has never been steered toward domination over any Arab regime. Egypt deals very carefully with its brothers. It has never been proven to interfere in the internal affairs of any fraternal state or to dictate a certain policy that is adverse to the vital interests of the Arab people.

The current talks in the Libyan capital and the important issues they involve reflect Egypt's eagerness to protect the Libyan people and their leadership, particularly since the United States, France, and Great Britain have reiterated the need to hand over the two Libyans accused in connection with the downing of the U.S. airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 for trial in either of the three Western states.

Libya has rejected that request, believing that it harms its dignity, and announced that it is willing to hand over the two defendants to a neutral state. Therefore, Egypt continues to make efforts to resolve this crisis between Libya and the West to protect the dignity of the Libyan Jamahiriyah. In the meantime, Egypt reiterates its commitment to the UN Security Council and international legitimacy's resolutions that imposed sanctions against Libya. Egypt and other states have committed themselves to respecting these resolutions.

Therefore, President Mubarak's talks with his brother Col. al-Qadhdhafi gain special significance now that the Libyan Jamahiriyah has been asked to make a final decision on the issue before October, the deadline the UN Security Council set for handing over the two defendants to avoid the collapse of confidence between international legitimacy and a UN member state.

A resolute and proper decision at the right time can spare the Libyan Jamahiriyah a confrontation with international legitimacy—a confrontation that the Arab nation can live without. Consultations between the Egyptian and Libyan leaderships will certainly reach a standard formula for a realistic solution to the Libyan crisis with the West. From the outset, Egypt has not ceased to make efforts with the West in a serious and sincere attempt to resolve this crisis in a manner that maintains commitment to international legitimacy and preserves the dignity of the fraternal Libyan people.

In conclusion, we would like to say that only the Libyan people and their leadership are lawfully entitled to make the final decision on which the stability, safety, security, and sovereignty of the Libyan people will depend. This decision will enable the Libyan people to play their effective role in the Arab nation, which needs all brothers now more than ever to serve pan-Arab interests.

Source Cited on Israeli-Russian Nuclear Station at Sea

NC1708203593 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 13 Aug 93 p 1

[Report by 'Adil al-Bahnasawi]

[Text] The Zionist entity has signed an agreement with Russia to build a floating nuclear station on board a mobile ship to desalinate sea water. The station would also be used for military purposes.

A responsible source at the Egyptian Nuclear Stations Authority stressed that Zionist and Russian experts are currently engaged in scientific studies to finalize the design of the station, which will keep travelling between the coasts of Haifa and Tel Aviv.

The source said the station will use enriched uranium, which is used to manufacture nuclear bombs.

The Zionist entity has ended tests on a 450-megawatt nuclear station made in Russia and located in Shivta in the Negev desert 25 km from the Egyptian region of al-'Awja. Zionist expert Amton Etaj [name as transliterated] was chosen to be the station's supervisor.

New Israeli Settlements Sign of 'Hypocritical' Policy

NC1808185393 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0604 GMT 18 Aug 93

[Text] Cairo, 18 Aug (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AKHBAR has said that the operation to increase the number of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories affirms the hypocritical policy followed by Rabin's government since it assumed power in Israel.

In its comment today, the newspaper pointed out that Rabin's pledges, after forming his government, to freeze settlement-building in the occupied territories made Washington grant Israel a huge sum of $10 billion. Washington had earlier suspended the approval of this grant during the Shamir government.

AL-AKHBAR said that despite all this, building housing units gradually has been resumed in indirect ways. Israeli

Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres claims that what the government is now doing is merely finishing the settlements that were started during the Likud government.

AL-AKHBAR cited an article published by an Israeli newspaper on the rise in the rate of building in the occupied territories and the establishment of new Jewish settlements. It affirmed that the settlements are a dangerous obstacle to the current negotiations. Israel will use the issue of these settlements as a bargaining chip to get the concessions it wants from the Palestinian side.

AL-AKHBAR clarified that the demonstrations by some extremist Jewish groups in Israel demanding that settlement-building continue will make Rabin use them as an excuse to continue building settlements, despite the fact that he pretends to be angry with these movements.

Editor Says Palestinian Differences Endanger Position

NC1908194093 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 13 Aug 93 pp 3-5

[Editorial by Chief Editor Makram Muhammad Ahmad: "The Unity of the Palestinian Position in Danger"]

[Text] A major accomplishment for the Palestinians would be to contain their current differences, maintain the unity of the Palestinian position, and avert a rift between the leaders of the Palestinians inside the occupied territories, who are members of the negotiating team, and the PLO leadership, which bears the responsibility for Palestinian decisionmaking. The Palestinian issue is at a crucial juncture, one that calls for a firm position as well as a grasp of the facts. The Palestinians should distinguish between basic principles on which there can be no compromise and practical problems which may require a certain amount of flexibility. Flexibility in the latter case does not mean a compromise on the unshifting Palestinian principles.

The most menacing prospect facing the Palestinians is that of division. Once more, we may find ourselves facing two conflicting stands and a divided nation. United, the Palestinians have given legitimacy to their representatives and inspired their leaders inside and outside the occupied territories to cooperate in a national project aiming to establish the authority of Palestinian rule over any inch liberated from the occupied territories.

It would be a great tragedy if pressures issuing from the territories and temptations emanating from abroad were to succeed in widening the gulf between the PLO leadership and the Palestinian negotiating team. The two sides should try to find appropriate solutions to their current differences. If both sides maintain their cohesion, a successful formula for cooperation between the leaders inside and outside the occupied territories will be preserved to the considerable benefit of the Palestinian cause.

Some of the leaders inside the occupied territories had some reservations about the way the PLO is being run as well as Yasir 'Arafat's style of decisionmaking. Three weeks ago, Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, head of the negotiating delegation, aired these reservations in public, calling for a review of the PLO's organizational methods and decisionmaking and proposing a collective leadership headed by 'Arafat.

This open criticism revealed a genuine crisis between the PLO leadership and the negotiating team. 'Abd-al-Shafi declined to meet U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during the latter's recent tour of the region, saying that he did not see in the current efforts a sign of hope that would justify the resumption of the negotiations.

The crisis soon developed into a resignation threat by three of the major members of the Palestinian negotiating delegation: Faysal al-Husayni, Hanan 'Ashrawi, and Sa'ib 'Urayqat. One of the rumored reasons behind the resignation was that the PLO forced the negotiating delegation to present to the U.S. secretary of state a Palestinian paper that makes more concessions in the issue of Jerusalem, in addition to the PLO's consent to apply autonomy to Gaza and Jericho. This could have led to freezing the powers of autonomy in these areas, although this power should cover all the Palestinian areas occupied after the 1967 war.

One other rumored reason was that the pBper that was presented to the U.S. secretary at the last moment was, in effect, an Egyptian-Palestinian paper phrased jointly by Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and 'Arafat's political adviser Nabil Sha'th in the absence of and without consulting with the negotiating delegation.

It might be necessary here to emphasize before anything else the following basic facts:

First, Egypt does not consider itself a substitute for Palestinians, because only the Palestinians are entitled to make the decision. Egypt's role is limited to putting its experience at the Palestinians' service if they so wish, without forcing itself on the decisionmakers as a party.

Second, Egypt does not play the role of the middleman between the Palestinians and the Israelis, because it sees its proper role as a defender of the stance the Palestinians opt to take.

'Arafat is continuing his meetings in Tunis with the Palestinian negotiating delegation in an attempt to find a way out of this crisis, amid real fears that the pressures the Palestinians inside the territories are putting on the leaders of the negotiating delegation might force them to adopt more rigid stands.

The truth is that the members of the negotiating delegation are coming under growing pressures within the occupied territories; they are living with a Palestinian public opinion that is getting sharper and more desperate every day due to the growing fierce and violent Israeli practices, the economic blockade, and the daily pressures

on people's lives—pressures that provide all the excuses to other Palestinian groups and powers, whose major concern is to ruin chances for a settlement and close the doors to negotiations.

The Palestinian negotiators went to Madrid about two years ago amid enthusiasm and optimism in the occupied territories that a comprehensive settlement restoring legitimate Palestinian rights could be reached. The Palestinian people, who creatively waged the intifadah and bore its sacrifices, saw off the delegation with roses and olive branches, supporting participation in the conference for just peace. Meanwhile, the Palestinian opposition was trying its best to prevent Palestinian leaders in the occupied territories from attending the talks.

This situation has now changed, not because the Palestinian people became anti-peace, but because the practices of the Israelis have led them to the edge of despair. This may have a negative impact on the Palestinian negotiators and render them unable to distinguish between the constant Palestinian principles and the need for flexibility to overcome procedural and practical obstacles and problems hindering any progress in the negotiations.

Circles close to President 'Arafat do not conceal their fears that something like this has indeed come to characterize members of the negotiating delegation who criticized 'Arafat for his unilateral decisionmaking and who criticized the Palestinian working paper that was presented to the U.S. secretary of state even though it did not relinquish any of the Palestinian principles.

The paper—as explained by PLO leaders—stresses that the geographic jurisdiction of the self-rule authority must include all the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967. It also stresses the need for the residents of Arab Jerusalem to participate in nominating and electing the self-rule authority—which means the PLO is underscoring the Arabism of Jerusalem. If the Palestinian paper accepted the idea of self-rule in Gaza and Jericho, this was meant as a kind of disengagement between the Israeli and Palestinian forces, similar to the disengagements that took place on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts after the October 1973 war.

In other words, the PLO has suspicions that the negotiating delegation might have fabricated this crisis so that it would not bear the responsibility of negotiations and decisionmaking in a Palestinian climate overwhelmed by anxiety, tension, and anger thanks to Israeli practices, which give the Islamic Jihad and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] a great opportunity to brand the negotiations as a sin and a crime that should involve no Palestinian from the occupied territories.

At the same time, when pressures accumulating within the occupied territories threaten to adversely affect the stand of Palestinian negotiators, external temptations may entice the PLO leadership to go the whole way and assume responsibility for conducting direct negotiations with the Israeli side. The PLO has the right to lead the Palestinian action inside and outside the territories by virtue of being the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

'Arafat adviser Nabil Sha'th recently said that Israel is close to recognizing the PLO and starting direct negotiations with it on the self-rule authority in the West Bank and Gaza. He said that this decision was made during his recent talks in Cairo with Israeli Environmental Protection Minister Yosi Sarid on instructions by Yitzhaq Rabin and 'Arafat.

This announcement at this particular time means that the PLO is ready to shoulder the responsibility of holding direct negotiations with the Israeli side if the Palestinian delegation in the occupied territories is not ready to continue its mission because it fully realizes the PLO leadership's role in shouldering the responsibility of the Palestinian decision.

Nobody can deny the PLO's right to lead the negotiations directly with the Israelis. Likewise, nobody can ignore the meaning and significance of Israeli recognition of the PLO's legitimacy. However, all this does not dismiss the real fears that discord may occur between the leaders in the occupied territories and others outside the territories. There are also fears that the Palestinian stand might lose its unity and that the Palestinian negotiating team might lose certain faces that had succeeded in gaining international public support for the Palestinian issue.

Perhaps the current events in the Palestinian arena cause concern. The dispute between the PLO leadership and the Palestinian leaders inside the occupied territories is not over something serious submitted on the negotiating table that should justify this dispute or lessen its effects. This makes it incumbent upon all sides to overcome this dispute to safeguard the unity of the Palestinian position.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of President Yasir 'Arafat to defend the unity of the Palestinians inside and outside the occupied territories regardless of the price because the issue is too big to be one of persons or organizations.

Importance of EC Role in Peace Process Highlighted

NC1808110293 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0335 GMT 18 Aug 93

[From the press review]

[Text] On the peace talks between the Arabs and Israel, AL-JUMHURIYAH writes: Egypt continues its contacts with the concerned parties on all levels to eliminate the remaining obstacles facing the peace process so that the 11th round of negotiations can start at the end of the month in Washington in accordance with the invitation by the two cosponsors of the conference: the United States and the Russian Federation.

These contacts are not restricted only to explaining positions. They shed light on the role a concerned state or a regional or international group can play within the framework of the new world order and the international responsibility for peace and stability.

The newspaper continues: In this framework, Egyptian contacts with EC countries become prominent. These countries have gained some of the confidence of the parties to the conflict in the Middle East. Their proximity to the area of conflict makes it in their interest to see this conflict resolved in a just and comprehensive way that would bring stability and safety to the Middle East region. This also provides an opportunity for improving the atmosphere and establishing cooperation, which would have a fruitful effect on the condition of the people and residents of the region.

The paper concludes: There is no doubt that despite all obstacles before the peace process, there has been some progress on the Arab level, in the attitude of the Israeli negotiators and people, and with the American partner who has begun to head in the direction of full participation in the peace process. What is now required is confidence-building so that public talk about a comprehensive settlement moves from mere talk and wishes to action and implementation.

Libya

Egypt's Mubarak, Delegation Continue Visit

'Coercive Measures' Rejected

LD1908201493 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1930 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] President Husni Mubarak of Egypt has stressed that his talks with the brother leader of the revolution during his visit to the Great Jamahiriyah focused mainly on the strengthening of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

On the crisis between the Great Jamahiriyah and Western states, President Mubarak told the journalists accompanying him that the imposition or stepping up of coercive measures would not solve the problem.

Accord Signed

LD1908204193 Tripoli JANA in English 1819 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Tripoli, Hanibal [Aug] 19, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The process verbal of the agreement to follow up the implementation of the decisions of the joint Libyan Arab Egyptian High Committee was signed this morning in Tripoli.

The secretary of the General Peoples Committee for Unity signed the process verbal on behalf of the Great Jamahiriyah and Dr. 'Atif 'Ubayd, the minister of state for prime ministerial affairs, representing Egypt signed the agreement. The two men are responsible for implementing the decisions drawn up by the joint Libyan Arab Egyptian High Committee to bring about Libyan Arab-Egyptian integration.

The process verbal detailed the following up of the agreements ratified between the Great Jamahiriyah and Egypt and to follow up the implementation of the decisions of the joint Libyan Arab Egyptian High Committee in all areas of cooperation and integration.

Mubarak, Delegation Depart

LD1908113393 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1030 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Excerpt] Tripoli, 19 Aug (JANA)—Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and the accompanying delegation left Tripoli 19 August after a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah. [passage omitted]

Sabri al-Banna Said Unable To Leave Tripoli

NC1908202993 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 16 Aug 93 p 7

[Unattributed report: "Correct?"]

[Text] Libyan opposition sources have disclosed that Sabri al-Banna, the head of Fatah Movement-The Revolutionary Council, also known as Abu-Nidal, is still living in Tripoli, Libya. Al-Banna tried to leave Libya for any of several Arab countries, but the authorities of all these countries told him that his presence on their soil would be undesirable under the current circumstances.

Morocco

King Pardons Prisoners on Revolution Anniversary

LD1908230893 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] The Ministry of Justice has issued an announcement stating that on the occasion of the eternal anniversary of the 20 August king and people revolution for this year, 1993, our master, the spritual leader, his majesty the king—may God prolong his glory and triumphs—has graciously issued his pious order to pardon 1,029 inmates, to remit the prison sentences of 347, to pardon 21 inmates, who will still have to pay the imposed fines, and to pardon 15 inmates, who will not have to pay imposed fines. [passage omitted]

Sudan

Foreign Ministry Statement Condemns U.S. Decision

NC1908155193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1520 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Khartoum, 19 Aug (MENA)—In a statement it issued today, the Sudanese Foreign Ministry strongly

condemned the American decision to place Sudan on the list of countries supporting terrorism.

The Sudanese Foreign Ministry categorically denied this accusation, "which is not based on any convincing facts," as the statement said.

It said that the major and real reason behind this American decision is the fact that the United States does not accept the Islamic current in Sudan.

The Sudanese Foreign Ministry expressed its regret about what it described as "American disregard" for the terrorist acts by the rebel John Garang movement in southern Sudan and the killing of innocent citizens and relief workers, as well as the downing of planes.

It affirmed Sudan's continuing adherence to the policy of establishing peace in the country and bringing aid to the suffering people in the south in cooperation with the United Nations and volunteer organizations.

Further on Statement

EA1908192793 Omdurman National Unity Radio in English 1500 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] The Foreign Ministry issued a statement today expressing surprise and regret over the U.S. Government decision to enlist the Sudan as one of the countries supporting terrorism. The statement refuted the U.S. Government decision and said the U.S. Government has not produced (?tacit) evidence for the U.S. (?allegation).

The statement pointed out to the efforts exerted by the Sudanese Government to the U.S. Government to explain the situation, but unfortunately the U.S. Government did not respond to the Sudanese Government initiative. The statement stated that the U.S. decision was made because of the Islamic trend in the Sudan.

The statement expressed regret when the U.S. Government did not consider the terrorists claims of the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army when it shelled Juba town, killing its senior officials and shooting down a civilian plane over Malakal. The statement concluded that the Sudanese Government will continue to exert efforts to achieve peace in the country, transport relief to aid the affected people and cooperate with the relief agencies.

Iranian Diplomat Criticizes U.S. Decision

EA2008123093 Khartoum SUNA in French 1015 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] Khartoum, 20 Aug (SUNA)—The charge d'affaires of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Khartoum has said that the U.S. decision to add Sudan to the list of countries supporting terrorism falls in line with unjust campaigns by certain imperialist circles to impede the process of development and the application of shari'ah in Sudan.

In a statement to SUNA, he added that the imperialist powers will include on this list all countries which are committed to an Islamic orientation. He affirmed the commitment of Sudan and Iran to international charters and stated that these countries rejected any terrorist initiative or action.

Government Expects U.S. 'Intervention' in December

NC1908211693 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 16 Aug 93 p 12

[Unattributed report: "Al-Bashir Expects U.S. Intervention Late This Year"]

[Text] Sudanese military sources have told AL-SHIRA' that the government of Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir expects U.S. intervention in late December or early January. The Sudanese Government has tried to improve its ties with Egypt in a bid to alleviate Western and Arab pressures on it.

[Economic, Planning, and Investment Minister] Dr. 'Ali al-Hajj went two weeks ago to Washington in an attempt to dissuade the U.S. Congress from recommending the inclusion of Sudan on the list of states sponsoring terrorism.

Egypt had asked the Sudanese Government to meet certain conditions before it seeks to alleviate the U.S. pressure, but the hardline wing led by [National Islamic Front leader] Hasan al-Turabi and 'Ali 'Uthman, at a meeting held recently in al-Turabi's house, refused to make any "intellectual or doctrinal" concessions in the face of Western pressure.

Kuwait

Amir To Visit Cairo, Damascus, Beirut 21-24 Aug

NC1908171293 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Excerpts] Our radio has learned that Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah will pay a one-day visit to Lebanon on 24 August for talks with President Ilyas al-Hirawi and senior Lebanese officials. [passage omitted] The Kuwaiti amir will begin a regional tour on 21 August with a visit to Cairo. This will be followed by a visit to Damascus on 23 August.

Customs Officers Thwart Smuggling of 'Important Maps'

JN1908204493 Kuwait KUWAIT TIMES in English 8 Aug 98 p 2

[Text] Al-Shu'aybah Customs officers discovered a massive consignment of important maps of military bases, oil wells and other sensitive areas in the country and books declaring the subversive designs of the Iraqi regime on Kuwait, a local daily reported yesterday. The maps and books had been packed inside 23 cartons of personal belongings registered for shipment to America under the name of an Arab expatriate, daily AL-ANBA' said. The goods were confiscated by the customs inspector, which he discovered after his suspicions were aroused by the huge quantity of personal belongings for shipment to America. He ordered a search.

Customs Director at the southern ports, 'Abd-al-Muhsin al-Shimali, told the daily that numerous smuggling attempts originating in countries which backed the Iraqi invasion have been foiled.

An important criterion for releasing goods reaching any of Kuwait's border posts, al-Shimali said, was confirmation about the country of their origin. "If goods have arrived from one of the pro-Iraqi countries, they are denied passage and returned," he said.

Smugglers get the country-of-origin stickers overstuck so as to mislead customers. "Therefore, importers must get the place of origin stamped or stitched," he advised.

GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries will meet in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, between August 15 and 17 to debate a possible unified customs tariff. Lists of goods will be exchanged among the six members, he said.

Al-Shimali denied any plan to increase the 4 per cent (of net value) customs tariff in Kuwait and called upon importers to appoint their representatives at the al-Shu'aybah Port to speed up transactions.

238 ships docked at the al-Shu'ayba Port in the first half of this year and KD [Kuwaiti Dinar] 12 million was collected in customs tariff for the same period, compared to KD 24 million last year, al-Shimali said. This decrease is attributed to the fact that most goods were imported in the first half of last year.

About 140 to 160 containers are daily inspected by the customs officials at al-Shu'ayba Port. This number touched 250 immediately after liberation because al-Shu'ayba was the only port which resumed activities.

"Now, coast guards have started requesting ships to dock at al-Shuwaykh Port after it was equipped with the necessary facilities," al-Shimali said, because al-Shu'ayba is basically an oil port.

Yemen

Information Minister Interviewed on Arab Reconciliation

NC1908133793 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0510 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Telephone interview with Information Minister Hasan al-Lawzi, in Sanaa, by Fawzi al-Jundi, in Cairo, carried on the "Dialogue From Afar" program; date not given—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Al-Jundi] Welcome to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Al-Lawzi] Thank you.

[Al-Jundi] Let us begin with the Yemeni-Saudi negotiations to settle their border dispute.

[Al-Lawzi] This is a new-old issue. What is taking place is a continuation of former positive steps made by the committee of technical experts in this connection. [passage omitted]

[Al-Jundi] Minister al-Lawzi, since our talk has taken us from the issue of borders to the issue of inter-Arab reconciliation, what can you tell us about the Yemeni Government's efforts to restore normal relations and achieve a comprehensive inter-Arab reconciliation?

[Al-Lawzi] Our efforts spring from our conviction—the conviction of all Yemenis, the leadership, the government, and the people—that inter-Arab reconciliation is necessary and inevitable. Our efforts are also a response to current public calls by some Arab leaders, notably His Highness [United Arab Emirates President] Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan, and the Arab League secretary general who has been making continuous efforts in this regard to get this issue moving. The Moroccan king and his country have been making similar efforts. All these efforts and current bilateral meetings will undoubtedly bring about inter-Arab reconciliation. [passage omitted]

[Al-Jundi] Your Excellency, you are therefore calling for an invigoration of inter-Arab ties. This makes me ask about a particular issue, namely the need to end all remaining effects of the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait

as an important step toward achieving inter-Arab reconciliation. What are the Yemeni policies on this issue in particular?

[Al-Lawzi] I can say that the overall Arab effort to defend UN resolutions achieved a great objective as you have noted. It is important, however, in addition to handling the problems resulting from the Gulf crisis, not to reopen wounds. We must heal the old ones and remedy the profound hurt caused to the dear Kuwaiti nation. We must heal the wounds and end the Arab nation's divisions. Those who sit down for a dialogue must be willing to shake hands and be open-minded about reconciliation.

U.S. 'Aggression' on Air Defense Battery Draws Protest

Foreign Minister Protests to UN

JN1908145093 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 19 Aug 93

["Text" of letter by Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf to UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali dated 19 August]

[Text] His Excellency Butrus Butrus-Ghali, secretary general of the United Nations, New York:

Your Excellency: At exactly 0855 [0455 GMT] today, Thursday, 19 August 1993, a number of U.S. warplanes carried out a brutal aggression against an Iraqi air defense battery 20 km west of Mosul. The warplanes dropped flares on the aforementioned position and nearby areas. This resulted in fires, property damage, and the injury of a citizen.

At 0910, the U.S. warplanes committed a second aggression. They dropped a number of cluster bombs on the same position

At 0940, the U.S. aggressors committed a third aggression. They sent their warplanes to drop more cluster bombs on the same position.

At 1010, the U.S. warplanes tried for the fourth time to approach the aforementioned Iraqi position. However, having failed to do so, they carried out a cowardly act of aggression. They dropped their cluster bombs on a main road, injuring a civilian.

Your Excellency, the new U.S. acts of military aggression against Iraq today provide new pieces of evidence which prove that the United States is committing an aggressive, unjust policy against Iraq and the Iraqi people. They also affirm that the air ban imposed by the United States and its allies against Iraq is an illegitimate measure which has nothing at all to do with UN resolutions. The real objective of this measure is to continue acts of conspiracies and aggression against Iraq and its people and to jeopardize its security and territorial integrity. The Government of the Republic of Iraq strongly condemns and denounces the U.S. aggressive acts and holds the Government of the United States fully responsible for its aggression against the security, safety, and interests of Iraq and the Iraqi people. Iraq fully reserves its right to legitimate self-defense in accordance with international law and the UN Charter.

Please accept our best regards.

[Signed] Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf, foreign minister of the Republic of Iraq

[Dated] Baghdad, 2 Rabi' al-Awwah 1414 Hegira, corresponding to 19 August 1993

Provocation of U.S. Aircraft Denied

JN1908164593 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1633 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Baghdad, 19 Aug (INA)—An official spokesman this evening denied a Pentagon statement to the effect that the air defense battery which was attacked by U.S. aircraft today fired two missiles against the U.S. aircraft. In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, the spokesman said this U.S. allegation is false, fabricated, and groundless.

The spokesman added that the U.S. air attack on the defense battery was unprovoked, and that the battery fired its anti-aircraft guns against the attacking U.S. aircraft and forced them to flee.

High-Tension Lines Damaged by Raid

JN1908190393 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1836 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Baghdad, 19 Aug (INA)—It was announced here that two high-tension lines were cut after they were hit by cluster bombs dropped by U.S. aircraft today.

A responsible source at the Ministry of Industry and Minerals today INA that the two high-tension lines were cut and sustained damages that resulted in power cuts. They are line No. 1, which has a capacity of 132 kilovolt and extends from the Saddam Dam to Mosul, northern Iraq, and the Tel 'Afar-Badush line.

The source explained that teams in charge of fixing lines have begun work to restore power to the two lines.

Memo to UN Objects to U.S. 'Violations' of Airspace

JN1908131993 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0810 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] New York, 19 Aug (INA)—Iraq has again lodged a protest with the United Nations over the continued violations of Iraqi airspace by U.S. aircraft for purposes of surveillance and harassment.

In a memorandum of protest addressed to UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali yesterday, Iraq affirmed these aircraft continued to violate Iraqi airspace over various areas in northern and southern Iraq during the 9-15 August period. During that period, these aircraft conducted 485 air sorties.

Iraq asked that the memorandum be circulated among the UN Security Council members, and that it be deemed a UN Security Council document.

More Allied Aircraft Violations Protested to Arab League

JN2008115193 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] Iraq has once again protested to the Arab League over continued facilities provided by the rulers of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to the U.S., British, and French aircraft in their endless violations of Iraqi airspace and threats against Iraq's security and sovereignty.

In a letter to the Arab League secretary general yesterday, the Iraqi envoy to the Arab League explains that on 14, 15, and 16 August, the U.S., British, and French aircraft conducted 104 hostile sorties and violated Iraqi airspace after taking off from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Iraq's permanent Arab League representative asked that the letter, which includes a detailed list, be circulated to Arab League member states.

Paper Rejects U.S. Decision on Sudan-Terrorism Links

JN1908132593 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0650 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Baghdad, 19 Aug (INA)—The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH condemns the U.S. Administration's decision to add Sudan to the list of countries sponsoring terrorism.

In an article published today, the paper, which expresses the official views of the Iraqi Government, says: The excuses advanced by Warren Christopher to justify this U.S. move are both flimsy and baseless.

The U.S. secretary of state claimed that the Central Intelligence Agency had discovered that the Sudanese Government was involved in an attempt to blow up the United Nations Headquarters, and also in plans to assassinate U.S. and Arab figures, including Husni Mubarak.

AL-JUMHURIYAH adds: This U.S. charge will remain untrue as long as there are no court verdicts substantiating it.

The paper assails the White House's apathy, as demonstrated in its unlawful treatment of world peoples, states, and leaders, saying: By its engagement in hostile practices, the U.S. Administration has departed from the domain of international legitimacy and legal commitments for good. It is now content with pointing accusing fingers at world states; this has actually become the backbone of its relations with and policy toward world states.

The paper links the recent U.S. position toward Sudan to the overall U.S. positions toward certain Arab states which are governed by nationalist leaders who are not influenced by foreign powers, saying: The new U.S. position toward Sudan is not peculiar. We have, indeed, expected it. We expect an escalation of this position in the future.

AL-JUMHURIYAH goes on to say: Direct assault against the Arab states which have failed to give in to Washington's policies and dictates has become the hallmark of the U.S. policy toward Arab states.

The paper says Arab regimes which fought in U.S. trenches are responsible for encouraging Washington to persist with its aggression against the Arab nation, noting that the subjugation and capitulation of several Arab regimes, their willingness to implement U.S. policy with its covert and overt objectives, and the alliance of some of these regimes with the U.S. Administration as well as their participation in the anti-Iraq offensive, which aimed to cripple Iraq's pan-Arab role, have all rendered the United States a domineering power influencing the Arab region.

Radio: Mubarak Headed 'Down Path Toward Abyss'

JN1908171093 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1340 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Commentary by Raja (?al-Buhayj) entitled "Al-Alfi Today, Husni Mubarak Tomorrow"; from the "Radio Newspaper" program—read by announcer]

[Text] Al-Alfi today, Husni Mubarak tomorrow. This is how diplomats in Cairo commented on the assassination attempt against Egyptian Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi in the center of the Egyptian capital yesterday. The assassination attempt resulted in the death of three people and the injury of eight others, including six policemen. The Husni Mubarak authorities launched a large-scale detention campaign against elements of the Egyptian opposition, which was held responsible for the attempt. Security measures were intensified to levels unprecedented in recent years.

This attempt on the life of al-Alfi clearly indicates the strength of the armed Egyptian opposition and its ability to wage a confrontation that can reach even the leader of the Egyptian regime himself. All the repressive measures and death sentences issued and executed en masse against the opposition elements have absolutely failed to curb the escalating and growing acts of the armed opposition. This indicates that the Egyptian regime is quickly sliding toward the abyss. Definitely, failure and disorder are among the most important characteristics of the economic and political situation in Egypt. They are active elements that will lead to further tightening of the noose around the regime and its institutions by the sons of the Egyptian people. This is at a time when this regime continues its confused policies and persistence in treason to the end. This regime's treasonous stand on the Mother of Battles and the questions stirred by this stand about the price that it received for this treason are still remembered.

Although details may differ, all events affirm that Husni Muabark is following al-Sadat's footsteps down the path toward the abyss, and that the sons of the Egyptian people must express their true will and restore to Egypt its shining Arab face.

Talabani Urges Turkey To Occupy Karkuk, Exploit Oil

NC1908175393 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, has urged Turkey to occupy Karkuk in cooperation with Iraqi Kurds to control the oil installations there. In a statement to the TURKISH DAILY NEWS published yesterday, he called for opening the oil pipes in Karkuk after occupying the city and allowing a Turkish company to exploit the oil there. He claimed that this measure is in line with the UN resolutions. He warned against Turkish-Syrian-Iranian cooperation against the Kurds, saying that it may motivate the Kurds to concentrate their efforts against these countries, leading to grave consequences, as he put it.

Seven IDF Soldiers Killed, 2 Wounded in Lebanon Explosion

IDF Spokesman Details Incident

TA1908162393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman has just released the following report: Seven IDF soldiers were killed this morning in an explosion while on operational duty in the western sector of south Lebanon. Two soldiers were injured in the incident, one severely and the other lightly. The families of the fallen and the injured have been notified. This morning around 0500 [0200 GMT], a Golani Brigade force was on active duty in the western sector in south Lebanon. A charge placed on its route exploded, killing the commander of the unit and six other soldiers. Two additional soldiers were injured.

The prime minister and defense minister, the chief of staff, and the Commander of the Northern Command arrived at the headquarters of the northern division and held an initial debriefing. Our correspondents Karmela Menashe and Yo'av Aviv report that the deputy commander of the unit, a sergeant, assumed command and calmly called in rescue forces. Last week, five explosive charges placed by terrorists in the security zone were safely detonated.

Rabin Briefs U.S. on Attack

TA1908165693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Yitzhaq Rabin, prime minister and defense minister, this afternoon convened the ministers for a special consultation in Tel Aviv. Washington was also updated about the details of the incident in south Lebanon. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports:

The deadly incident in south Lebanon turned the entire political agenda upside down. The issue of Deputy Minister Pinhasi suddenly looks entirely trivial. Yitzhaq Rabin, today a full time defense minister, devoted all his time to the Lebanese issue. After touring the area and meeting officers and soldiers, Rabin held consultations on the Lebanese issue in his office in Tel Aviv. The United States was updated through diplomatic channels on all the details of the incident in south Lebanon. As one political source defined it: The channels between Jerusalem and Washington are open in both directions.

Several ministers with whom I spoke referred to several points relating to the attack:

One, an unequivocal demand that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] explain how such an incident could happen. One of the ministers said good answers and appropriate conclusions must be drawn. He added that talk about bad luck will not suffice here.

Two, examining the political results of Operation Accountability in light of the deadly attack. The question is whether Syria is again, playing a double game by taking advantage of Israel's and the United States' commitment to the peace process.

Three, the relationship between the peace process and the situation in south Lebanon. All the ministers emphasized that the IDF and its officers are not subject to political constraints. Hizballah was and remains an enemy which must be relentlessly pursued without any limitations imposed by Warren Christopher. The ministers added, however, that this must be done wisely, and sometimes restraint is a sign of strength.

Rabin Reacts to Events

TA2008062293 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Telephone interview with Prime Minister and Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin by Tzvi Lidar and Hayim Hecht—live]

[Text] [Lidar] Sir, I would like to start off by asking you something: There are virtually no politicians today—either in the coalition or in the opposition—or objective commentators that do not assert that Hizballah would not be able to carry out its activities, including yesterday's incident, without Syria's support. Is it still business as usual with Syria, despite this assessment and despite the fact that nine soldiers were killed as a result of yesterday's incident?

[Rabin] First of all, yesterday was a tragic and painful day for the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], which lost nine of its soldiers and commanders. It was a very painful day for the bereaved families. I wish to extend the condolences of the IDF and the government, as well as my own personal condolences, to the bereaved families. I also wish the best of health and a speedy recovery to the two wounded soldiers. I would also like to send some words of encouragement to the IDF and SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers, who carry out their mission day and night, under difficult conditions, and achieve their goal, which is peace and security for the residents of the Galilee. As for Syria, it is no secret that for years Syria has permitted the transfer of equipment to Hizballah from Iran. Perhaps, recently, Damascus has placed some limitations on this supply. Syria supports the policy of Lebanese military activity, in this case by Hizballah, against the Israeli and SLA forces in south Lebanon. There have been no changes in this regard, and it has been Syria's long-standing policy.

[Lidar] Was this not included in the understandings reached following Operation Accountability?

[Rabin] I will get to that point later. Moreover, Syria has not even halfway encouraged the Lebanese Government to dispatch adequate forces to those areas where the Lebanese Army could deploy itself had it the will to do so, as well as Syria's permission. At this stage, Operation

Accountability has achieved its goal: to exclude from the war of attrition, which has been conducted against us for years by various terrorist groups in Lebanon.... [changes thought] In the past, it was the Palestinian organizations, but for several years extremist Lebanese Islamic elements, primarily Hizballah, have assumed the lead in attacks against Israel. As things stand now, and I believe that this arrangement can also be maintained in future, we managed to move Israel's northern settlements and their residents outside the scope of this war of attrition.

Ever since I established the security zone when I was defense minister in the national unity government over eight years ago, it was primarily meant to guarantee security to the residents of Israel's northern settlements. Even at the time, I knew that achieving this goal would necessitate constant fighting, and today this fact is manifestly clear. Neither the military operations carried out during the 1970's, nor Operation Litani [when the IDF occupied part of south Lebanon in March 1978], nor the Lebanon war have eliminated terrorism in south Lebanon. Until a full political solution is reached with Syria and Lebanon, we will have to continue fighting terrorism on an almost daily basis, just as we have in the past. This has been the situation for the past 30 years. There have been changes in the kind of weapons used against us, or in the identity of our adversaries, but one should always look at the big picture.

Today, we are facing two terrorist campaigns: terrorism from Lebanon and terrorism waged by the Palestinians from the territories. In both cases, the extremist Islamic elements are leading the campaign: Hizballah in Lebanon, and of course Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad in the territories. The Islamic groups are not the only Palestinian terrorist organizations, there is also the PLO and its affiliates, but Hamas or the Islamic Jihad are responsible for the most vicious attacks in the territories as well.

[Lidar] Sir, let us get back to the issue of Syria and to my first question. You just criticized Syria and blamed it for not withholding support from Hizballah. What about drawing the appropriate conclusions? Why are things still business as usual? The opposition has demanded to stop the talks and make their resumption conditional on the fulfillment of several demands.

[Rabin] The opposition was in power when it agreed to the convening of the Madrid conference on the basis of the letter of invitation. The opposition did not demand that Syria prevent the supply of arms to Hizballah. It did not demand that Syria change its policy of supporting the attacks against Israel and the security zone by Hizballah and the other terrorist organizations, whose headquarters have been situated in Lebanon for many years. I do not believe that there is any room to change this framework today.

Let me add that in my assessment, if we fail to resolve the conflict within two or three years, and if the wave of Khomeyni mania sweeping the Arab world does not subside, then we may find Iranians in Lebanon within two to seven years. We must take a good, hard look at the situation: We must pursue the activity designed to guarantee peace and security to Israel's northern residents. The IDF and SLA must strive to take more effective action and to suffer less casualties. I deeply regret that Hizballah had the upper hand yesterday and managed to plant explosive charges in a certain area. In both cases, the Israeli forces, which were on routine patrol, simply triggered off explosive charges or mines, or some combination of the two, without Hizballah even firing one shot at our troops.

Consider the type of war we are fighting today. Most of the casualties over the past eight and a half years have been the result of car bombs and roadside charges. It is very difficult to combat this phenomenon; however, we must look for better ways and do our very best to avoid the kind of tragedy that took place yesterday.

[Hecht] Mr. Prime Minister, up to what point will these provocations by Hizballah be tolerated? When will Hizballah cross the red line and force us to settle accounts? Hizballah planted numerous explosive charges in recent days. Why was it necessary to wait until yesterday's fatal explosion before sending our Air Force to attack them?

[Rabin] Look, the war over the security zone has gone on for the past eight and a half years. It is also merely the continuation of a 30-year-old war against terrorism. What are the alternatives? What has not been tried already? We tried the Litani Operation. Did that restore quiet? The Lebanon War lasted for three years. We even signed a peace agreement with Lebanon. Did that stop terrorism? Despite all the pain and sorrow, I think that we are pursuing the right path, because there are three alternatives: One, to accept the kind of situation which prevailed prior to Operation Accountability, in which attacks on our settlements were part of this terroristic war of attrition. That was a red line we will permit no one to cross. If the understandings in this respect, according to which the residents of northern Israel must remain outside the scope of any fighting over the security zone, are not kept, then we will draw the appropriate conclusions. The second possibility is to launch an all out war with Lebanon again, whether out of the intention to reach Beirut or as part of a plan to expand the security zone. This will resolve nothing, just as Litani Operation and the Lebanon War failed to resolve anything. The third option is to pursue our current policy, adapt ourselves to the modus operandi of Hizballah, and to thus guarantee one thing: peace and security to the residents of the Galilee while adapting ourselves to the changes in Hizballah's modus operandi in order to reduce our number of casualties. When fighting terrorism, it is impossible to guarantee that there will be no casualties.

[Hecht] Sir, is the fact that no katyusha rockets were fired from south Lebanon last night a mere coincidence, or is it, in your opinion, an indication of Syria's ability to

force Hizballah to stick to the understandings that were reached after Operation Accountability?

[Rabin] I do not think it is a coincidence. I think it is a result of Operation Accountability, at least as far as things stand now. The moment this red line is breached, Israel will definitely not let the matter pass.

[Hecht] Is the IDF under any political constraints?

[Rabin] I do not think so. The main consideration is what is good for Israel's security. This is the consideration that guides me, not the dates of the talks in Washington or any other considerations. On the other hand, what is all this talk about stopping the talks? What will be gained by stopping the talks with Syria? It will only serve to fan extremism in the region, strengthen the Iranian influence, and increase the supply of weapons from Tehran. The spread of Khomeyni mania is the worst thing that can possibly happen, and we must do everything on both the military and political levels to prevent it from spreading among the Arab nations, which either live together with us, such as the Palestinians in the territories, or in neighboring countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. I very much hope that President Mubarak will take appropriate action against the Khomeyni-inspired elements in Egypt, where one can also see the effect of Khomeyni mania on local extremist Islamic elements. One must look at the big picture, at the danger of the spreading Khomeyni ideology, and to find a combined response both on the military level, which will demand a painful price, and on the political level, which was also exact a price.

[Lidar] Mr. Yitzhaq Rabin, prime minister and defense minister, thank you very much.

Chief of Staff Comments on Attack

TA1908190693 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Interview with Lieutenant General Ehud Baraq, Israel Defense Forces chief of staff, by Ya'aqov Ahime'ir and military affairs correspondent Beni Liss—live]

[Text] [Ahime'ir] Mr. Chief of Staff, did not the understandings achieved in the wake of Operation Accountability give Hizballah legitimation to operate in the security zone?

[Baraq] The understandings do not relate to the ongoing operations in the security zone, and it is our assumption that these operations will continue. The understandings were to stop the automatic firing of katyushas on the Galilee, and so far they have accomplished this. If the situation changes, we will know how to deal with this.

[Liss] Did not the understandings result in extremely mild IDF [Israel Defense Forces] reactions? Over the last few days and weeks the terrorists attack almost on a daily basis and plant bombs, whereas the IDF's reactions are extremely mild.

[Baraq] There is no basic change in the IDF's reactions. First, Operation Accountability in itself constituted an extremely sharp reaction resulting in many dozens of casualties and wounded among Hizballah. Today, too, we attacked targets in the area of Ba'labakk and Janta. We will continue to operate against Hizballah targets as long as necessary and to the best of our understanding.

[Liss] Lt. Gen. Baraq, if the Hizballah targets in the al-Biqa' are fair game for the IDF, why should we attack them only after soldiers are killed? If these are permanent targets, why did we not attack them yesterday, or the day before yesterday?

[Baraq] We are on live broadcast now, and I do not want to deal with considerations relating to the precise timing of military operations. We will carry out the operations with the most appropriate timing to achieve our targets.

[Ahime'ir] Lt. Gen. Baraq, what is the situation in the security zone since Operation Accountability in terms of encounters with Hizballah and other elements?

[Baraq] There is an ongoing war of attrition in which Hizballah terrorists are trying to undermine the security zone, whereas we are striving to preserve its stability. We have here a bitter enemy which is learning from its mistakes. Just as we score successes, they, too, are occasionally successful. We are like boxers in the ring. One cannot avoid an occasional punch. Our aim, however, is to knock the enemy out.

[Ahime'ir] Is Syria helping Hizballah operate in the security zone?

[Baraq] Syria is not directly helping Hizballah. Altogether it regards Hizballah attacks in the security zone favorably and turns a blind eye to this activity and to Iranian help, both in the past and occasionally even recently.

[Liss] To what extent can we rely on the Lebanese Army deployed in south Lebanon?

[Baraq] At this stage the Lebanese Army has not proved its capability or evinced any will to eradicate Hizballah activity.

[Liss] Is it capable of doing this?

[Baraq] In our opinion with political Syrian backing it can do so. We must wait and see whether at a certain point Beirut [as heard] will evince enough political will to order the army to do so. I do not know, and as long as this does not happen we will continue to preserve the security zone.

[Ahime'ir] It is well known that the main aim of the security zone is to protect our northern settlements. In light of what happened early this morning, do you think that the present make-up of the security zone is enough to protect our settlements?

[Baraq] The activity and operations in the security zone undergo constant changes according to the developments, and this will continue to be the case. From this point of view the security zone fulfills its mission, although the price at times is extremely painful—today we paid a very dear price. I want to reiterate that we are in the midst of a war of attrition and are striving to ensure the security of the Galilee. To a certain extent we are also struggling over the conditions of peace. Our deepest sympathy is extended to the bereaved families and to the IDF units which lost some of their soldiers.

I want to update you that just now I have heard that in the continued military operations—the same area in which the incident occurred this morning—another IDF soldier was killed, and two others were wounded. The family of the deceased was notified.

[Ahime'ir] Can you give us any more details about this extremely grave incident in which another IDF soldier was killed?

[Baraq] I cannot give you any more details before we are properly briefed. However, the operations in the area are continuing in order to locate more bombs and find out whether the incident was caused by terrorists deployed in the area, or by roadside charges planted beforehand.

[Ahime'ir] Did this incident take place near the location of the incident in which the seven soldiers were killed?

[Baraq] Yes, the incident which occurred this evening happened near the area in which the seven soldiers were killed.

[Liss] Was it not too early to pull out forces from the security zone? Following Operation Accountability there was a feeling of complacency. We felt that after we beat up the terrorists we can start pulling out the forces and rely on the SLA [South Lebanese Army].

[Baraq] There is no complacency. The forces which were taken out are units which direct heavy fire on the other side of the border. At this point we do not need this kind of firepower aimed at pinpointed targets, while we do need these forces elsewhere. Let me remind you that they were not deployed beyond, but rather within the security zone. I do not think there was any complacency or that we pulled out forces too early.

[Liss] Would you agree with me that the understandings restricted our ability to react—to wit, we cannot fire beyond the villages of the security zone because then they will fire at our northern settlements. In fact, we are in a defensive position. Do you agree with this?

[Baraq] I do not want to go into the details of the understandings. Today's events have nothing to do with the understandings. In my opinion the understandings did not restrict us—they are aimed at removing our settlements from this war of attrition. Together with my colleagues in the General Staff, I served as a young company commander in our previous war of attrition more than 20 years ago. That war was waged more than 250 km from our settlements. During that war we occasionally hit the Egyptians and sometimes we received blows from them. All the action, however, took place far beyond the horizon. In the present case, however, a long war of attrition has taken place near settlements which were required to pay part of the price. This is what we strove to eliminate in Operation Accountability. So far this aspect of the understandings has withstood the test, and time will tell whether it will continue to do so.

[Ahime'ir] A last question, Lt. Gen. Baraq. Is it possible that katyushas will be fired at our northern settlements tonight? Will the events in the security zone have any repercussions on the situation beyond this area?

[Baraq] This afternoon we attacked targets in the al-Biqa' area, in a region under Syrian control, and I assume that this attack was painful to Hizballah. In the past such attacks resulted in katyusha attacks against the Galilee settlements. I cannot say whether this will be the case today. I think there is a chance that this will not happen this time. If I am wrong, however, we will know what to do.

[Liss] Will you issue an order to the residents of the northern settlements to enter their shelters?

[Baraq] At this point no such order is necessary. If we deem such an order necessary we will do so.

Rabinovich Notes U.S. Concern Over Incident

TA1908174793 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] The U.S. Administration is concerned about the repercussions the serious incident in south Lebanon would have on the peace talks. At the same time the United States understands it cannot ask Israel to refrain from a reaction. Our correspondent in Washington, Arye Golan, reports that these remarks were heard today by Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich and Israeli diplomats in talks with U.S. officials in the State Department. The Israeli diplomats were told that Hizballah attempts to foil the peace process. The meeting today was originally meant to discuss preparations for the resumption of the peace talks late this month.

Political Parties React to Attack

TA1908172493 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1620 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Report by Tziyon Nanus—live]

[Text] The right-wing parties claim that the fatal incident in south Lebanon proves that the understandings reached at the end of Operation Accountability are worthless. Tzomet says the agreements are worth nothing; no arrangements are possible in Lebanon; there is no one to talk to there. The Likud states that a situation in which the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] hands are tied in its war against Hizballah because of vacuous

understandings is impossible. The NRP [National Religious Party] asserts that the killing of the soldiers indicates that Israel must be doubly suspicious regarding Syrian and Lebanese promises and must take these promises with a grain of salt.

The Likud maintains that Israel should change its policy to restore security in the north. Moledet states that the peace talks must be suspended at once. Rabin must suspend the talks with Syria until it employs full force to curb terrorism in Lebanon, the NRP states. Tzomet believes that Israel must deliver a very determined message to Syria that attacks on our soldiers will immediately stop the peace process, and that peace talks cannot be held without quiet in Lebanon.

The left-wing Meretz party says that the bloody incident in south Lebanon forces Israel to retaliate sharply against the attackers and hit Hizballah directly.

[Jerusalem Israel Television in Arabic at 1630 GMT on 19 August carries a recorded interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, conducted in English and with Arabic subtitles, in Norway on 19 August, in which Peres says: "We are aware that the Hizballah want to stop the peace process, the peace negotiations. Whatever we shall do will have the double consideration: how to provide security, and how to continue with the peace process. Surely, you would expect that the Lebanese Government will do what they should do in order to make Lebanon a safer place, and I think that our government will try really to take the measures which are necessary to punish the responsible people and prevent occurrences like it in the future." Asked about the nature of the retaliation, Peres says that his remarks "do not spell anything specific because I think, first of all, the government will analyze very, very carefully who did what and how it happened before we take any decisions."

[The same newscast carries a recorded reaction by Agriculture Minister Ya'aqov Tzur, in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles: "Israel will have to clearly define methods of fighting terror groups that continue operating inside the security zone. Reality in the security zone requires that our soldiers must be able to freely operate and provide security to our northern settlements. This is essential for Israel. The struggle continues, and it executes a heavy toll from Israel."

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1630 GMT on 19 August carries a live telephone interview with Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer, who says that "Hizballah must realize that it will pay the full price, not Lebanese civilians, but the Hizballah murderers." Concerning the risk of recurring attacks on Israel following the air raids, Ben-Eli'ezer says: "Even if there is a shadow of risk, we cannot sit idly by and allow them to continue attacking our soldiers."]

Leaders Criticized for Soft Policy

TA2008140293 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 20 Aug 93 p 8

[Commentary by Alex Fishman: "The Government Is Being Gentle, and Soldiers Are Shot Like Sitting Ducks"]

[Text] Yesterday was the worst terror attack in the security zone since the car bomb attack in 1988. It took place less than three weeks after the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] completed a successful and broad military move in south Lebanon.

In their meeting yesterday, the ministers also tried to comprehend this paradox. In the wake of Operation Accountability, the government sits as a team of interpreters for the understandings reached under U.S. auspices on 31 July. Does the attack violate the understandings with Syria, Lebanon, Iran, and Hizballah, or not, the ministers wondered. What would be the type or scope of an IDF reaction that would fit the American criteria, and what would not? The questions were asked because the arrangement that followed Operation Accountability was merely a framework with elusive contents, open for interpretation.

The problem of how to interpret the agreements exists not only between the parties sharing the understanding, but also in the minds of the Israelis who took part in writing the document and who were present when it was endorsed. For example, not everyone is entirely clear as to whether, in response to a provocation such as a single katyusha fired on a northern settlement, the IDF may use force similar to that employed in Operation Accountability. This is precisely the reason why the government today functions as an interpreting committee.

The interpretation given yesterday by the council of sages kept the government on track with its standard policy: a Scandinavian-type defense policy in the face of a sweeping wave of fundamentalist terror, for which Israel is but a single station in the region. At the end of its session, the Council decided to give Hizballah and the Syrians a quiz in reading comprehension. The Air Force was sent to al-Biqa' and attacked Hizballah storage buildings in the village of Janta (where it visited during Operation Accountability), and two Hizballah posts near Ba'labakk. The targets were carefully picked, and the attack was followed by explanations to the media that there were no civilians there who could get hurt.

Stressing the issue of the civilian population is part of the quiz given Hizballah, which was attacked, and Syria, which is in charge of the al-Biqa'. We fired at a civilian-free area, therefore you must not fire katyushas at the Galilee. Now Israel is waiting to see whether Hizballah got the Scandinavian message and, showing consideration for Rabin's government, will not waste good katyushas on the Galilee. There are two possibilities here: Either they interpret the agreement differently, or they

understand it all right, but could not care less about it. The coming weeks will tell us exactly what they understand.

Before we managed to grasp the magnitude of the first tragedy, another soldier of the force combing the area after the blast got killed by another explosive charge placed there. The interpreters will now sit down and hold feverish debates on whether this corresponds with the understandings; whether Israel can settle for yesterday afternoon's air raid, or should launch another. This way of handling things will essentially lead to a further deterioration.

The disaster made it absolutely clear that the achievements of Operation Accountability have been wasted in the past three weeks. If the operation was the result of nearly two years of negligence—during which Hizballah has managed to establish itself as the main force operating against the security zone—yesterday's attack was the immediate answer to the victorious confidence felt by the defense establishment heads following the big military operation.

Since the interpretation of the understandings is rather vague, it was clear from the very beginning that the real meaning of the understandings will be dictated by the events on the ground. Operation Accountability created momentum, an opportunity to establish norms of retaliation, punishment, and IDF-initiated activity that would be different from that which existed before the operation. The navigators of Israel's defense, however, acted as if they had just won the Six-Day War; only the parades were missing. Some perhaps even believed that, in his advanced age, Warren Christopher would come leaping over the hills every other day, solving our problems for us. In any event, management has gone on its summer vacation. Like we said—Scandinavia.

At the same time, in August alone, Hizballah carried out 19 attacks against the IDF and SLA [South Lebanese Army], placing eight bombs and attacking three outposts with mortars and Sagger missiles. According to the understandings, continued Hizballah activity in the security zone is "legitimate." What is unacceptable, is Israel's low-key reaction to these provocations. Such a reaction might be interpreted by Hizballah and Syria as confirmation that they may go on hunting down soldiers like sitting ducks in the security zone playground. The IDF soldiers are at the posts or on the routes, and the guerrillas await them in ambush. Why, for example, did the government not order the attack on the Ba'labakk sites immediately after the first Sagger missile was fired at an IDF post only a few days after the operation was completed? Why was the reading comprehension quiz not held then? Did we really have to wait for eight victims?

A senior source at the IDF's Northern Command last night praised the force that stayed at the site after the explosion, rescuing the wounded and evacuating the dead. The charge was placed a few yards away from the where the soldiers had been going out for their activity and from where they came out that dawn. That is, someone was familiar with the routine activity of the soldiers and placed an explosive charge on their expected route. Furthermore, that someone was also familiar with the routine rescue operation that follows an attack, and placed another charge to be detonated on the combing forces. Hence, if the soldiers functioned well, the leadership—on all levels—must search itself.

Return of First Group of Hamas Deportees 'Postponed'

TA2008095393 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 20 Aug 93 p 12

[Report by Amnon Yosef]

[Text] A first group of deportees that was scheduled to return to Israel soon will apparently not return at this stage, due to yesterday's disaster in Lebanon.

One of the Army officers in charge of the preparations for the deportees' return has told HADASHOT that the return of 129 of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists has been postponed. Over the past several days, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has completed its preparations for the return of the first group of the 400 Hamas activists who were deported in December 1992 following the murder of border policeman Nisim Toledano.

The 129 deportees were scheduled to return next Monday [23 August; as published] through the Metulla passage, and were to be detained upon arrival. Some 35 of them were supposed to be sent to prison compounds in central Israel, and another 44 were to be sent to the Qezi'ot detention facility. The first group scheduled to return includes deportees who committed relatively minor offenses.

IDF Soldier Wounded, Fugitive Detained in Gaza Strip

TA1908174393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldier suffered eye wounds from shrapnel caused by a hand grenade thrown at an IDF patrol in Rafah today. The soldier was transferred by helicopter to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba, where he will undergo surgery shortly. His condition is listed as moderate to serious.

Our correspondent Moti Amir adds that this morning an explosive charge was discovered in an IDF observation post in Gaza. A bomb disposal expert dismantled the bomb safely.

This morning the security forces launched an operation for apprehending fugitives in Gaza, but the fugitives apparently managed to escape. During the operation several houses were damaged. Several axes and knifes were found in one of the houses.

Samir Salim, a 20-year-old fugitive from Khan Yunus, was apprehended by the security forces this morning.

Shin Bet Captures Hamas Computer, Data Bank

TA1908155993 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 19 Aug 93 p 5

[Report by Hayim Broida]

[Text] It was one of the best kept secrets of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in Judaea and Samaria: A data bank listing the names of activists, operations they carried out, the number of weapons in their possession, funds received from overseas, military training, and interrogation methods used by the Shin Bet and ways to endure them. The computer and diskettes containing all this information were captured by the Shin Bet.

This is one of the most important finds by the Shin Bet following the arrest of 23-year-old 'Abd-al-Rahman Fahmi Zaydan from Dayr al-Ghusun in Samaria. Zaydan was described as "the operations and intelligence officer of Hamas in Judaea and Samaria." The fact that the computer and data bank had been uncovered had not been reported to date, and came to light upon the indictment of Zaydan at the military court in Nabulus.

Zaydan was also found in possession of a chart describing Hamas' organizational structure in the territories, the areas of responsibility of each and every squad, and the hierarchy of command by order of importance. A copy of the chart was smuggled to Hamas headquarters in Jordan.

Zaydan acted as liaison between the squads in the field and headquarters in Jordan, was involved in two car bomb attacks in Ramat Ef'al and Mehola, and kept in direct contact with the squad that murdered border policeman Nisim Toledano and policemen Dani Hazut and Moti Yisra'el in Hadera. Zaydan also handled money sent to Hamas, distributing funds to the squads and to wanted men in hiding at his discretion.

The military prosecutor reveals in the seven-page indictment that the defendant was recruited to Hamas back in 1990 while visiting Amman, and was given the alias "Anam."

He maintained contact with the headquarters in the territories and in Jordan by using paper chits containing instructions and guidance hidden in capsules. These would be swallowed by emissaries who would then cross into Jordan and back. This way, two-way information naming key activists, prospects to buy weapons, money matters, military training, and contacts between the squads was transferred twice a month.

Before his arrest on 7 June, Zaydan received orders to assemble a car bomb and plant it in Israeli territory as an act of revenge for the closure of the territories. The defendant relayed the order to one of the squads, but it was not carried out because the security forces arrested some of its members before that.

In one of the messages Hamas leaders in Jordan sent to the defendant, they explicitly noted that Hamas had entered "a new era" in terror attacks, with an emphasis on planting car bombs. The reason cited in the chit was that "such attacks are more effective and assembling car bombs does not require special qualifications and is not costly."

The indictment dwells on the capture of a computer and 18, 1.2-megabyte diskettes used as a data bank for Hamas' activities in the territories. The computer was hidden in a secret warehouse and was moved to a different location whenever fears arose that it might be discovered.

The indictment shows that the defendant used to hide the chits he received from Jordan in empty film containers. He would then store all the data on diskettes in a personal computer, thus creating a very important archive.

The data bank cited the number of active members in the squads and their aliases. These included names of "sleepers," members who were active and used in the past, and must be contacted again and reactivated. A directory titled "Prospectives" listed the names of potential local young recruits. Another directory listed encoded telephone and fax numbers of Hamas offices in the territories, Jordan, and Germany.

Zaydan noted the weapons in the possession of activists and which weapons each of them had been trained to use. The diskettes included data about each squad and the attacks it perpetrated, as well as the names of activists arrested by the Shin Bet. He also kept a breakdown of the funds received from overseas and which activist had received what sum of money.

Another document dealt with the Shin Bet's interrogation methods and ways "to endure various types of interrogation," and copies of it were handed out to every new recruit. The decision to distribute this document came in the wake of the arrest of a terrorist who incriminated many Hamas members.

Lebanese Report of Proposed Withdrawal From Golan Denied

TA2008111493 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 20 Aug 93 p 5

[Report by political correspondent Shim'on Schiffer]

[Text] Political sources in Jerusalem emphatically denied a report yesterday in the Lebanese newspaper NIDA' Al-WATAN that the United States has suggested that Israel and Syria reach an agreement on a document of principles that the Golan Heights will be handed over to Syria within six years.

According to the report, Dennis Ross, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's close aide, discussed the declaration of principles document between Israel and Syria during his visit to Damascus.

According to the document quoted by the Lebanese newspaper, Israel and Syria will make a public commitment to set up a just and permanent peace based on Security Council Resolution 242. The agreement will be implemented within a period of six years, after which the entire Golan Heights will be handed over to Syria. A map with a four-staged withdrawal will be appended to the document, according to the report.

According to high-level sources in Jerusalem, the Americans did not present Prime Minister Rabin with any document containing a proposal in principle for an Israeli-Syrian peace or a map for a staged withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Nevertheless, it was noted that in the talks the prime minister held with Secretary Christopher they did discuss various scenarios on a future arrangement between Israel and Syria.

Various sources confirmed that Syria said it would agree to a gradual Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, which would extend over several years, after Israel expresses its agreement to recognize Syrian sovereignty over the entire Golan Heights and to be willing to return the territory to Syria in return for full peace between the two states.

The newspaper reports that the document contains several other principles:

—Syria will continue to close its border with Israel to Palestinians and will make a commitment not to start a war against Israel or to participate in a war started by another state against Israel.

—Observers and early warning stations will be deployed on the Bental hilltops, and a Syrian guard force will be deployed in the areas from which Israel withdraws.

According to the Arab sources, Egypt suggested in consultations with Syria and Israel that several amendments be made to the American document:

The withdrawal from the Golan Heights will be implemented in three not four stages; the withdrawal will be carried out within five not six years, simultaneously with the interim period of Palestinian self-government; the example of the Sinai setup will be copied on the Golan Heights, which will be divided into three security regions, with an observer force of Americans and Russians deployed in the region adjacent to the Israeli border.

Supreme Court Delays Demjanjuk Deportation by 15 Days

TA2008090893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0844 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] We now move over to our legal affairs correspondent Mira Amsalem broadcasting live from the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, where the judges have just completed their deliberations.

[Amsalem] Judge Me'ir Shamgar, the president of the Supreme Court, has acceded to the appellants' request and decided to postpone the deportation of John Demjanjuk from Israel, pending the submission of an orderly request for another hearing on the ruling that was issued on 18 August. In other words, the deportation has been put off for another 15 days.

Justifying his decision, the president of the court explained that if the deportation was carried out now, before the appellants' request to hold another hearing was submitted, then any viable discussion of the request would be impossible. Therefore, John Demjanjuk's continued presence in the country was necessary to give the request for an additional hearing any real meaning.

Al-Majali Addresses Group on Democracy, Election Law

JN1908145693 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali has affirmed that democracy is not a theoretical, philosophical notion, but an actual practice, and a building that should be constructed on solid ground and sound foundations. Such foundations, he said, must be built one after another within a flexible plan that takes reality into consideration, but without violating constants and principles. He added: Undoubtedly, the House of Representatives is one of the material manifestations of democracy. In this context, to achieve full equality in duties and rights, and to reach a state of maturity capable of producing people qualified for undertaking their responsibilities irrespective of their religion or origin, the Election Law must take steps forward. This came in an address by Dr. al-Majali last night during a meeting in Amman organized by the Jordanian Society for the Alumni of American Universities.

Dr. al-Majali said: None of us can claim to be the ultimate source of wisdom, nor can anyone of us claim that the model one is defending is the best model. The prime minister added: Days, events, the game of life and death, immigration and flight, siege and relaxation, and growth and recession have taught us that life is too precious to be wasted and that the human brain is too great to be abolished. He said: I do not want to delude anyone into believing that the Arab order which we sought to rehabilitate and unite, and for which His Majesty King Husayn has laid down a course and a path, was proceeding on the right track. All signs indicated that there was a widening gap between the rich and the poor, a persistence in national isolationism, a retreat in the volume of commercial, capital, and labor cooperation, an erosion of the common Arab institutions, and an inability on the part of the Arab League's charter to cope with developments.

JORDAN TIMES on Response, Reaction to New Amendment

Minority Votes Gain Importance

JN1908115993 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Aug 93 pp 1, 4

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter P.V. Vivekanand]

[Text] Amman—The one-person, one-vote system introduced into the electoral system has brought in countless new elements into play ahead of the Nov. 8 elections, scrambling the strategies of many.

One such element, politicians and analysts argue, is what could turn out to be an unprecedented lobbying for Christian votes by their coreligionists as well as "moderate" or "liberal" Muslims and vice-versa.

The scenario, along this line of thinking, unfolds like this: While the eight seats reserved for Christians in the 80-member Lower House of Parliament will be filled by Christian candidates who get the highest number of votes among the Christian candidates in their respective constituencies. The number of votes that Muslim candidates garner will, in theory at least, have no relation whatsoever to the Christian candidates.

As such, the Christian community is assured of the eight seats in the House, even if Christian candidates get the lowest number of votes when compared with Muslim candidates.

This opens the door for Muslim candidates to campaign for Christian votes with an argument that common interests will be further served if they vote for "moderate" or "liberal" Muslims and seek to dilute the strength of the Islamists.

This adds to what is seen as the Christian community's quest to establish their clout on the scene in proportion to the seats allocated to Christians in the House.

The eight Christian seats represent 10 per cent of the House, but it is a known fact that their strength in the overall population or the eligible electorate is below five per cent (no definite figures are available on the number of registered Christian voters).

The three seats reserved for the Circassians and Chechens could not be classified along the same lines as the Christians because the Circassians and Chechens are Muslim and the argument of cutting through Islamist strength is unlikely to work with them since some of them are already seen as supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood. Furthermore, it is said already, that the Islamist candidates among them are the most likely to win in the next elections.

"It will be ridiculous for Christian candidates to be elected with 300 or 400 votes from a constituency when their Muslim counterparts secure several times that number," said a seasoned analyst and former minister. "This will reflect badly on the morale of the Christian community."

Results of the 1989 elections were not indicative of voting strengths since alliances played a major role.

Many Christian candidates sought support from the Brotherhood during those elections. Under such agreements, the Brotherhood leadership instructed its supporters to vote for allied Christian candidates in return for the concerned candidates asking their supporters to do the same for Brotherhood candidates.

The alliances worked well since no one was losing anything because of the bloc-voting system under which voters could vote for more than one candidates—up to six or eight candidates in some constituencies—including the seat reserved for the minorities.

Fakhri Qa'war, who won the Christian seat from Amman's affluent Third District in the 1989 elections apparently with a lot of help from the Brotherhood, believes that a

certain number of Christian voters will only vote for Christian candidates regardless of all other considerations because of family and community relations, but that will not be enough to score resounding victories.

"The marked difference in the Third District is that election platforms and objectives of candidates are the main factors that influence the voters," said Mr. Qa'war.

Furthermore, "substantiated approaches from Muslim candidates to Christian voters place an additional burden on Christian candidates to convince uncommitted Christian voters of their election programmes." he said.

However, Mr. Qa'war said, "The field is open for Christian candidates to try to convince Muslim voters to vote for them."

"I believe that what counts more than anything else in the polls is the soundness and feasibility of programmes of candidates regardless of religious background," he said.

By the same token, Christian candidates would be better off trying to get together and reduce their numbers in the race by consensus since the so-called "community votes" could be easily splintered with a high number of candidates trying to win the hearts and minds of the voters, says the senior analyst.

A former minister who had lost his bid for a House seat in 1989 but intends to run again in November believes that "the Christian voters are a highly intelligent electorate."

"What matters for a majority of them is the qualifications of the candidate rather than party affiliations or religious appeal," said the ex-minister.

According to former Karak Deputy 'Isa Madanat, the lone communist member in the dissolved Parliament, the overriding factor that will be quite visible when results come out of the Nov. 8 polls is victories with substantially reduced number of votes when compared with comparative figures from 1989.

For instance, says Mr. Madanat, "I got 10,500 votes in the last elections, but this time I do not think I would get more than 3,000."

But then, he adds, "the cases with Muslim candidates will not be any different, given the fact that there would be dozens if not hundreds of aspirants to the House from each constituency."

Sa'd Haddadin, who won the Christian seat from Madaba in 1989 also with considerable help from the Brotherhood, believes that candidates have to keep all options open and not take anything for granted or draw comfort from the results of the last elections.

"There is a host of new factors in the equation," he said. "The four years of parliamentary life since 1989 have raised the political awareness of the voters, and this, coupled with the change in the electoral process, has to be given utmost consideration."

Parties 'Willing To Live With' Law

JN1908134793 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Aug 93, p 1, 4

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter Ayman al-Safadi]

[Text] Amman—Political parties and figures Wednesday [18 August] seemed willing to live with the electoral change the government unilaterally introduced Tuesday with many observers characterising the opposition's reaction to the introduction of the new law of one-person, one-vote as as "weak and confused."

Seven leftist parties Wednesday said they will legally contest the constitutionality of the draft temporary election law which His Majesty King Husayn approved Tuesday. But with some signs that the Islamic Action Front (IAF) would not support their possible action, observers say the opposition will be fighting a "losing battle."

The observers say the opposition is aware of that and would not therefore favourably consider boycotting the elections as an expression of its rejection of the changes. The most opposition parties would do is seek legal action against the mechanism through which the changes were introduced and announce their objection to it as undemocratic, they said.

That, however, would be directed towards making only a public statement. "The opposition knows it cannot reverse the government's decision," said one political activist.

The government amended the Election Law to introduce the one-person, one-vote formula against the will of political parties and without the national dialogue it had said would precede any action on the law. Analysts believe the change would work against large and well-organised political groups.

Before the Election Law was amended, the majority of political parties had threatened to fight the change, with the IAF warning that it would boycott the elections. One day after the change was announced, however, these threats seem to have fizzled out with many party heads and political figures completely ruling out boycott of the elections as a viable option.

The IAF Tuesday hosted a meeting of political parties opposed to the change but the gathering failed to agree on a line of action. The only conclusion one could "sense from (that) meeting is that the IAF would not boycott the elections," said one former deputy who attended the meeting.

The Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'th Party [ASBP], The Jordanian People's Democratic Party, the Democratic Progressive Party, the Jordanian Communist Party, the Socialist Democratic Party, the Arab Democratic Party and the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party held

a similar meeting Wednesday and issued a statement rejecting the change as undemocratic and in "violation of the spirit of the Constitution."

These parties are planning to hold another meeting next week to further study their positions, sources said.

There are three major political forces in Jordan who might oppose or support the new law: The Islamists, the centrists and the leftists. The centrists, who mainly represent tribal and strongly pro-regime figures, usually support whatever policies the King adopts. So if the Islamists choose not to challenge the new temporary election law, one analyst said, opposition would come from the leftists only.

And on its own, even leftist former deputies and politicians agree, the left would not be able to form an influential opposition front.

"The Islamic Action Front is the only party capable of taking a position that would put pressure on the government." One leftist former deputy told the JORDAN TIMES Wednesday. Without the IAF, the opposition would be ineffective and fragmented, he said.

"We announced our rejection of the new election law in order to make a stand, but we will not boycott the elections," Jordanian ASBP President Ahmad al-Najdaar told the JORDAN TIMES Wednesday. A spokesman for the Jordan's People Democratic Party also said the party would not boycott the elections and the opposition would not be able to reverse the government's decision to change the Election Law.

"Since the law has been issued, I believe the elections will be held according to it," said 'Azmi al-Khawajah of the leftist Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party. Mr. al-Khawajah said the party was still "studying its position on the changes" but added that boycotting the elections has not been considered as an option.

"Some parties are saying they would study their position on the change as if they were surprised by them," said former leftist deputy Dhib Marji. "This is a weak stand," he said.

Observers attributed the "restrained" reaction to the fact that King Husayn put his weight behind the decision to change the Election Law.

The government relied on the King's popularity to pass the changes," said one observer. "No government could have done it on its own."

"In his speech, the King sent a message to the people who trust him and believe in him, that 'this (changing the law) is his decision'," said one former deputy.

The opposition knew the majority of the people would not go against a decision taken by the King, said one observer.

People started expressing their support for the King immediately after he announced the electoral change. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, Wednesday reported that "leading personalities, heads of municipalities and tribal figures" sent the King cables expressing their "total support" for his decision to change the Election Law.

Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament (Senate) Ahmad al-Lawzi also sent King Husayn a cable in which he emphasised that "amending the Election Law would represent a bright turning point in enriching our democratic march."

Mr. al-Lawzi said the Senate fully supports the electoral changes announced by King Husayn in a televised speech Tuesday.

Other observers said opponents of changing the Election Law were encouraged by the King's assurances that he would personally see to it that the elections be fair and free.

But in the view of many observers, the major reason behind the "weak" reaction to electoral change which the majority of political parties oppose is the "non-existence of real opposition in Jordan."

"The Islamists never represented true opposition," one former deputy, Mr. Faris al-Nabulsi, said.

"The left is weak and divided," said another former deputy.

And the opposition in general "has no political platform or set of choices around which it could mobilise people," said Mustafa Hamarnah, a political science professor who heads Jordan University's Strategic Studies Centre.

Dr. Hamarnah now expects election campaigns to start in full swing and other observers say the next Parliament will continue the debate on the Election Law.

The changes announced Tuesday touched on one aspect of the law only. The next Parliament would probably deal with other issues such as voting districts, minority seats and the age of eligible voters, observers said.

Government To Amend Export-Import Rules, Publish Gazette

JN1908133593 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Aug 93 p 3

[Text] Amman (Petra)—The government will soon cancel procedures that made it mandatory for merchants to obtain import-export licences and will also cancel fines normally imposed on merchants violating rules concerning certificates of origin, according to Minister of Industry and Trade Bassam al-Sakit Wednesday [18 August].

At a meeting with members of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Dr. al-Sakit said the government, which is keen on orienting the public on its various decisions, plans to sell the official gazette to the public like other daily newspapers.

Furthermore, the minister said, it is keen on and will pursue efforts to ensure private sector's participation in decision-making concerning trade, which is normally taken by the Ministry of Inudstry and Trade.

Dr. al-Sakit was responding to several queries raised by the chamber members who criticised the government for lacking a clear financial policy and not seriously dealing with the question of tax reform.

The chamber members demanded that the Income Tax Law be revised along with the Companies Law and the amendment of the law on encouraging investment.

The speakers demanded that exports to Iraq be considered according to a list of products rather than the names of the exporters as well as a reduction on the fees levied by the Aqaba Port in order to reduce the cost to the consumer.

They further demanded that civil and military consumer markets should sell non-essential commodities. They said that the government should create a market to run parallel to the Ministry of Supply.

Fair Trial Urged in Assassination Conspiracy Case

JN1908154093 Amman AL-BA'TH in Arabic in Arabic 18 Aug 93 p 1

[Editorial: "Has Khosrau Better Claim to Justice?"]

[Text] At this point in time, it may be premature to comment on the State Security prosecution's decision to press charges against suspects in the conspiracy to kill the king of the land. Whether their case is tried by a civil or military court, due consideration must be accorded the due process of law.

Strikingly and interestingly, however, throughout the past four months since investigation of the case began, there has been no firm word from the authorities as to whether any arrests have been made. In the meantime, the suspects' relatives have been kept in the dark about the fate of their children or whether they are alive or dead. A good many human rights activists have been raising questions about the fate of the disappeared; some political and media circles have gone so far as to treat the disappearance of the detainees as a case of kidnapping; other such sensational terms have been used.

The charges brought by the State Security prosecution against the group rank among the more serious ones in their category, if not the most serious at all.

However, there are clauses in our country's Constitution providing for individual rights and guarantees of a fair trial. If the suspects are remanded in custody for too long, denying them contact with their families or the benefit of legal counsel as provided for in the Constitution, rumors of mistreatment and confessions extracted under torture will have a field day. With martial law a thing of the past, the way the case is being handled seems to be out of place.

It is to be hoped that the suspects will be given a fair trial. No one's interests will be served if innocents are convicted or criminals acquitted precipitously as happened in certain cases in the past. Regardless of the seriousness of the charges in question, public good stands to gain from the full play of due process.

With the benefit of our country's long and bitter experience, it should be possible to give the suspects a fair trial and act on the assumption that the accused is innocent until proven guilty. This is to be in tune with our tolerant shariah and the attitude of civilized societies that reasonable doubt should tip the balance in favor of the accused. It is this kind of attitude that can safeguard our country from pitfalls and bottlenecks and earn us a good name both at home and abroad.

Yemeni Vice President Meets King, Departs 19 Aug

JN1908185393 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Today, at al-Hasimiyah Palace, His Majesty King Husayn received Yemen's Vice President Mr. 'Ali Salim al-Bid to review the distinguished relations between the two brotherly countries. They also looked into ways to develop bilateral ties in various spheres, and discussed Arab developments and the peace process.

They stressed the region's need for a just and comprehensive peace that must prove acceptable to future generations.

His majesty stressed the importance of dialogue if the Arab nation is to emerge from troubled inter-Arab relations and proceed toward a pan-Arab renaissance resting on a higher regard for human rights, democracy, and pluralism.

His majesty and the Yemeni vice president also talked about the distinguished state of democracy in the two countries as a model for other Arab states. Mr. al-Bid expressed his appreciation for the his majesty's ongoing efforts to lift the Arab nation from its plight. He stressed that the state of Arab affairs is bound to change for the better and that the attainment of Arab solidarity must be shared by all Arabs. This is because none of the Arabs have been spared troubles.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Khalid al-Karaki, Royal Court Chief Khalid al-Karaki; Muhammad al-'Adwan, Royal Protocol chief; and Dr. Yasin Sa'id Nu'man, secretary general of the Yemeni Socialist Party; and the Yemeni ambassador in Amman.

His Majesty King Husayn and His Highness Crown Prince Hasan were on hand to bid farewell to Mr. al-Bid when he left Amman this afternoon.

Hostilities Continue in South Following Hizballah Attack

Israeli Aircraft Raid Bases in Ba'labakk

NC1908143593 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1422 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Israeli warplanes raided Hizballah positions located 3 km from Ba'labakk hills at about 1445 [1145 GMT] today.

Meanwhile an Israeli military source this afternoon said that seven Israeli soldiers were killed and four others were injured when an explosive device went off as an Israeli patrol was passing in the south earlier today. The Israeli military censor banned broadcasting news of the death of the soldiers before their families were informed.

Hizballah this afternoon threatened to bombard north Israel if the Hebrew state renewed its bombardment of Lebanon following the operation this morning.

Hizballah Claims Second Assault

NC1908185193 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1818 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Two Israeli soldiers were killed in an attack by the resistance in south Lebanon, raising the number of Israeli soldiers killed today, according to Israeli sources, to nine. An explosive device that went off in the evening also injured another Israeli soldier in the same sector of the border strip where seven soldiers were killed earlier today. Two other Israeli soldiers were injured in the morning assault.

Three Israeli warplanes this afternoon raided Hizballah positions near Ba'labakk on Muhanna hill and Jabal al-Mallah in the 'Ayn (Burday) area opposite al-Shaykh 'Abdallah barracks and the al-Tibi firing range, a former Lebanese Army firing range, and a Hizballah training center in Janta near the Syrian-Lebanese border. The raid also targeted Hizballah's al-Fajr radio station.

Hizballah said two of its fighters were killed in the Israeli air raids on its bases east of Lebanon. Hizballah said the fighters were killed in the raid on a base in Wadi Masa near Janta, which is less than 3 km from the Syrian-Lebanese borders and approximately 30 km from Ba'labakk.

Hizballah also claimed responsibility for the second attack against an Israeli foot patrol in the western sector of the border strip this evening. Hizballah said that the second operation was in reprisal for the Israeli air raids. Hizballah issued a statement saying that the squad of Martyrs Najah Amhaz and Hasan al-Husayn, who were killed in the Israeli raids, launched the second attack.

In the meantime, Israeli warplanes are flying over the western sector, particularly the areas adjacent to the security strip, with flares turning the night into day.

Israeli Military Movements Monitored

NC2008090593 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0800 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] A state of caution prevails in the south and Western al-Biqa' for fear of a renewed Israeli aggression.

According to security reports received by our radio, military preparations have been monitored along the line separating the liberated areas and the border strip starting at the Bayt Yahun crossing gate, which the occupation troops have closed, across Majdal Silm and Haddathah, and up to Siddiqin. Israeli movements have been monitored in the direction of the Tallat al-Ahmadiyah post, which overlooks western al-Biqa'.

Meanwhile, Israeli helicopters have not stopped flying over the villages adjacent to the occupied strip. Israeli gunboats have also been monitored off the coast extending from al-Naqurah to Tyre.

Christopher Asks for 'Self-Restraint'

NC2008062893 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] Contacts with the United States have intensified in the past few hours to forestall any hostile action that Israel might launch against Lebanon following the death of eight Israeli soldiers in two operations carried out by the resistance yesterday inside the occupied security strip.

The Israeli reaction yesterday came in the form of Israeli air raids on the Ba'labakk.

The death of the soldiers has embarrassed the Israeli Government, which threatened Lebanon and said that yesterday's operations were the most violent since 1988. However, Israel added that the attacks did not violate the cease-fire arrangements.

Lebanon held a number of quick contacts with the U.S. side to pressure Israel not to carry out any new aggression against Lebanon. The United States, which feared the negative repercussions that the operations might have on the peace negotiations, has asked all the parties to prevent such a situation from occurring.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has sent a message to Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz asking Lebanon to exercise self-restraint.

Hizballah Members Held for 'Collaboration' With Israel

NC1908204693 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 16 Aug 93 p 7

[Unattributed report: "Top Secret"]

[Text] A number of Hizballah members in the south—in al-Nabatiyah, to be more specific—are currently being detained by the security organs of a certain party on

charges of collaboration with the Zionist enemy. There is evidence that the members in question sent, using special equipment, specific signals to the enemy during the week-long Zionist aggression against Lebanon.

The party organs holding the Hizballah members promised to hand them over to the Arab Syrian authorities to interrogate them in view of their having committed high treason through their contacts with the Zionist enemy.

Butrus-Ghali Criticized for Condolences to Israel

NC2008065893 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0530 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] Hizballah has criticized UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali for offering condolences to the families of the Zionist enemy soldiers who were killed in the Islamic Resistance attack yesterday without mentioning that they were killed on occupied Lebanese soil.

In a statement issued yesterday evening, Hizballah added: Butrus-Ghali should have offered his condolences to the families of 150 innocent martyrs who fell during the Zionist aggression.

The statement adds that the U.S. State Department comment that condemned the two Resistance attacks and failed to mention Zionist raids against peaceful Lebanese areas in al-Biqa' reveals unfair America's cover-up of that aggression.

Editor on Government 'Mistakes' Regarding Resistance

NC2008155493 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 10 Aug 93 p 1

["On the Road" column by Chief Editor Talal Salman: "The Public Corrected the Government's Mistakes"]

[Excerpts] The Lebanese have two reasons to celebrate. One is that the Israeli enemy's week-long campaign of destruction and intimidation failed to achieve its declared political aims. The other is that a confused and divided government, immersed in its petty worries and busy with a range of narrow and personal pursuits, has failed to impart its sickness to the public, or—and this would be even worse—to the Army, which is just starting to implement one of the most crucial missions in its modern history. [passage omitted]

Some officials, intentionally or unintentionally, made statements that were at best misguided and at worst treasonous, statements that almost matched the Western and Israeli arguments concerning the resistance and those who so honorably sacrifice their lives fighting under its banner to defend national dignity.

Some have tried to "disassociate" themselves from the resistance, claiming that it is an Iranian product, an imported force that is alien to Lebanon.

With all due respect to Iran and the international role of its Islamic revolution and its local political and material assistance to the resistance, through its special link with Hizballah, it is unjust for Lebanon and the Lebanese to be depicted as "disciples" or "advocates" of a foreign party or as people who fight the Israeli enemy, which occupies their land, on orders from Iran and to serve that country's particular objectives.

Such an accusation of Hizballah is completely unacceptable and basically wrong. Hizballah's fighters are "mujahidin from Lebanon." True, they fight under the banner of Islam, but they do so to liberate their land, not Iran's. [passage omitted]

However, the worst of the government's errors concerned the Army. Some officials want to use the Army to serve aims that are incompatible with the interests of the country and the nation. Some waged a hate campaign to turn the Army against the resistance. [passage omitted]

Worse still, the Israeli enemy gave signals suggesting that it expects a certain response [from the Lebanese Government] that would mutate and distort the Army's role and make the Army a virtual "ally" of Israel in fighting the resistance. In the Western lexicon, resistance is just another word for terrorism.

The public welcome of the Army in the areas under the control of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon confirms what has always been obvious, but is always useful to reiterate:

—The people know that they have only one enemy, Israel.

—The people see the Army as a force consolidating their steadfastness in the face of the Israeli enemy. They do not seek the Army's support against the resistance or against one another. [passage omitted]

Let us hope that the government has learned from its mistakes and will not repeat them, not under the pretext of surprise, for the government was not taken by surprise, except in terms of the scope and ferocity of the Israeli attack, nor confusion, nor insufficient capabilities, nor lack of communications with those with whom communications should always be maintained, because they are the nearest, in peace as in war, in resistance as in negotiations, in good as in hard times.

Syrian View of Army Deployment Decision Examined

NC1908210593 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 14 Aug 93 pp 1, 11

[Report by the political editor]

[Excerpt] It is no secret that the government got confused as it faced the Israeli invasion and that Lebanon is still suffering and may suffer further from the consequences of this confusion.

Some government officials misjudged the situation and others drew the wrong conclusions. They wasted political

gains that could have been made had their actions been under control, had the government been pursuing a unified policy, had they read the political developments correctly, or, especially, had they initiated a dialogue, listened to voices other than their own and other than the voices of those who "whisper" at night, or held consultations on matters that imperatively need to be discussed.

The Army's deployment in the operation theater of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon exposed what is more serious than the defect, the shortcoming, and the confusion in the way the government is behaving—something that casts doubts on the soundness of the policy and the nature of the forces that benefit from it.

All elaborate attempts to explain good intentions and link causes with results were useful neither for hiding nor for ending the sharp crisis that was experienced, and is still being experienced, by the Lebanese Army in its relations with the political leadership thanks to the hasty decision tasking the Army with an extremely delicate mission without an in-depth study of the circumstances and good preparation to ensure success and minimize dangers—and they are serious.

Moreover, there is a silent crisis—"a qualitative one this time"—in the relations between the government and the Syrian leadership—one that Damascus has painstakingly tried to contain and handle calmly. It is highly likely that Monday's meeting [between Lebanese and Syrian leaders in Latakia on 16 August] will be devoted to discussing this crisis and the details of the bilateral contacts and talks. Positions will be defined to determine responsibilities and a working plan will be agreed upon to identify the damage and contain whatever can be contained of the perils of the impromptu decision and ensure complete discipline in the future, especially as concerns the "peace process" and all its requirements.

Damascus had hoped Lebanon (together with Syria) could take advantage of the failure of the political objectives of the Israeli invasion to strengthen its negotiating position in the 11th round of peace talks, which will open in Washington on 30 August. But the confusion of the government in Beirut wasted this chance.

Syrian officials are not hiding their disturbance and indignation at the "mismanagement" in Beirut and at "a serious defect" in Lebanon's coordination with Damascus when it comes to serious issues. With some astonishment, these officials say: The Lebanese officials are exhausting us with their visits, contacts, and insistence that we decide some trivial disputes among them over appointments for some jobs, but they "forget" to consult us on substantial issues, and they act on their own, sometimes under the pretext that they are committed to a certain policy, sometimes under the pretext that they are trusted and authorized by us, and often under the excuse that they do not want to disturb us!

Some visitors to Damascus cited the Syrian leadership as revealing serious dimensions for the unilateral decision to deploy the Army in the area of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon in the south. The Syrian argument goes as follows:

"Could anyone in the Arab world or outside possibly believe that we have not been consulted on this serious decision? When an Algerian citizen, for example, hears about the deployment decision from the radio of his country or from a foreign radio, he will take it that Syria approved of it and is a partner to the responsibility.

"The serious thing about this decision is that it will cast doubt on our achievement of obtaining the cease-fire without making any political concessions.

"It will appear as though the deployment decision was part of a deal, to which we are a party, while the fact is that there was no deal and the contacts with Washington ultimately entailed two points: an Israeli cease-fire in return for a halt to the firing of Katyusha rockets at Israeli settlements.

"The timing of the decision and of its announcement suggests that Israel is involved in it. It appeared as though the decision was a complementary point, a hidden clause, or a condition in the cease- fire decision, which is absolutely not true.

"The timing of the decision and the developments accompanying its announcement suggest that its aim was to deal a blow to the resistance in favor of the occupation, not to bolster resistance against the occupation.

"Moreover, the decision helps those who want to use it to exempt the United Nations from its responsibility of helping the legitimate Lebanese authority restore its occupied territory in the south and western al-Biqa' as provided by Security Council Resolution 425. It also confuses and embarrasses the Lebanese Army, which could have spared itself this new complicated responsibility.

"Finally, the decision gave Israel a gratuitous gain that made up for some of its political losses.

"Every citizen has a right to ask why the United Nations responded so quickly when it has always rejected the deployment of the Army on its territory. The UN force cannot make such a decision without consulting Washington, certainly, and Israel, most likely.

"How come this rejection, which was supported by an American veto, turned into acceptance?"

Lebanese officials have certainly been informed, either directly or indirectly, of this Syrian position. This is why, perhaps, they arranged to meet tomorrow, on the eve of a visit to Damascus, for a meeting with the Syrian leadership, to work out unified responses to legitimate questions that will be posed. [passage omitted]

Press Views Lebanon Ties, Israeli Position, 11th Round

JN1908131293 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 19 Aug 93

[From the press review]

[Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH editorializes on the Syrian-Lebanese summit between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Ilyas al-Hirawi a few days ago. It notes the historic ties between Syria and Lebanon, affirming that the current strong and sincere cooperation between Lebanon and Syria is not a luxury for Lebanon, nor merely a Lebanese preference dictated by personal whims or changing circumstances, nor a development required only by the current status of Syrian-Lebanese ties. Given current regional and international developments, this cooperation is a national necessity enhancing the efforts to liberate occupied Lebanese territory, extend Lebanese sovereignty over all Lebanese soil, and confront Zionist ambitions in Lebanon. AL-BA'TH adds: Whoever, for one moment, believes he can achieve Lebanon's national objectives without Syrian support or involvement, or by pursuing anti-Syrian positions, is nursing delusions. In all frankness, we admit we are two independent states. However, this very independence, and efforts to immunize and defend it, require closer coordination, better cohesion, and stronger cooperation. The stronger this coordination and cooperation gets, the more vibrant and immune Lebanon's independence becomes. The opposite is quite true.

AL-BA'TH goes on to say: The experience of the recent Israeli aggression on Lebanon has made it clear to each and every Lebanese citizen, and to the entire world community, that Lebanon can count on Syria in hard times. It was Syria's position, as well as the courage and proper conduct demonstrated by the Syrian leadership, led by His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad, that immensely aided Lebanon and the Lebanese people in their recent ordeal, brought that aggression to an end without undermining the Lebanese people's right to struggle to liberate their occupied territories, and thwarted the Zionist enemy's objectives. AL-BA'TH says: Nobody can deny Syria's support for Lebanon in the peace talks. Its efforts to liberate its occupied territory is an asset for Lebanon that is enhancing its negotiating position on all levels. Syria is eager to promote Lebanese interests, just as much as it is eager to promote Syrian interests. This is because it does not see any contradiction in the interests of both countries. Additionally, Syria's heart is open to Lebanese brothers. During the recent summit, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad said Syria's support for the legitimate Lebanese Government and all its institutions will continue, as provided for in the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination. This will ensure the enhancement of bilateral ties on all levels and in all domains.

Under the headline "Peace Requires Positions," the newspaper TISHRIN editorializes on the Middle East peace talks, and Israeli positions on these talks. The paper lists a host of facts and developments indicating Israel is jeopardizing the peace process. TISHRIN adds: Those who profess an alleged concern for peace, and for making the 11th round of peace talks a success should not forestall these talks by making fresh threats against Lebanon. General Mordekhay Gur has reiterated that southern Lebanese areas will not see security and stability, and that Israel will use all types of weapons in these areas.

TISHRIN goes on to say: Israel has continued to build settlements in the Golan, and to expand others in many cities and villages in the West Bank. Even worse, Israel insists Jerusalem is unnegotiable. It is planning to make any possible restoration of Arab sovereignty over the city impossible. The Rabin government has maintained its military siege of the occupied territories. It has continued to evade the requirements of peace by advancing flimsy security pretexts. Concluding its editorial, TISHRIN says: The Israelis have acknowledged that good signs are emerging from Syria. Given this Israeli acknowledgement, do we not have the right, the paper wonders, to expect an Israeli reciprocity in this regard, and to expect indications of a willingness on Israel's part to subscribe to the components of the peace process, particularly since the countdown to the 11th round of talks has already started? After all, the paper says, if regional stability is to be promoted, this round of talks must be different from the previous 10 rounds.

For its part, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH publishes an article on the Middle East peace process, affirming that the Arabs have done their utmost to advance the peace process. They, the paper contends, have done their best to prevent the peace talks from collapsing and reaching a dead end. The paper adds: Throughout the past 10 rounds of talks, the Arabs have demanded nothing, but a clear Israeli commitment to implement the relevant UN resolutions. Similarly, they have demanded an Israeli endorsement of the land-for-peace formula. However, this positive and practical Arab stand has always run into Israeli intransigence, and also into deceptive Israeli maneuvers. Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: The attainment of peace in this part of the world is contingent upon positive Israeli positions, and upon an Israeli willingness to withdraw completely from all occupied Arab territories, foremost among which is holy Jerusalem. Withdrawal is the backbone of the peace process, as spelled out in UN resolutions, and enshrined in the U.S. initiative. Any other views or explanations excluding withdrawal that Israel might carry to the upcoming round of talks will only be a new attempt to waste time and effort.

Afghanistan

UN Special Envoy Holds Talks on Tajikistan

Meets With Rabbani

LD1908200693 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, met with 'Ismat Kittani, the UN secretary general's special envoy on Tajikistan, in Golkhana Presidential Palace this afternoon, and held talks with him. The press office of the state presidency reports that during the meeting, discussions covered both the honorable return of Tajik refugees to their homeland and border problems. During the meeting the president also remarked that the Tajik problem is an internal affair of that country, and that it should be resolved through talks and understanding between the Government of Tajikistan and the opposition groups of that country.

Demands 'Immediate Improvement'

LD1908212593 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] It is reported that esteemed Qotboddin Helal, first deputy prime minister, met with 'Ismat Kittani, the UN secretary general's special envoy on Tajikistan, in his office this afternoon. During the meeting the two parties held talks on the border problems between Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Mr. Kittani demanded the immediate improvement of the situation in the border areas. Regarding the border problems, esteemed Helal said: This issue is totally a matter for the Government of Tajikistan. Afghanistan can only play the role of a mediator to resolve the problem. The esteemed deputy prime minister described the artillery and air attacks by Russia on the territory of Afghanistan as illegal and demanded their immediate cessation.

Three Killed in Rocket Attack on Kabul

LD1908182493 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Three people were martyred and 22 injured when a rocket hit a minibus, which was full of passengers, in the Pol-e Hartel area. Quoting a reliable source of the general command of Kabul garrison, BAKHTAR has reported that the Gozargah and Pol-e Hartal areas, in ward 2 of Kabul City, were hit by 10 rockets yesterday afternoon and last night. The rockets were fired from a southerly direction, from Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] positions. One of them hit a minibus, which was full of passengers, in the Pol-e Hartel area. It caused [words indistinct] our compatriots. There were also heavy property losses.

Rabbani Delivers Independence Day Address

LD1908202593 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Excerpts] Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, took part in a grand ceremony this afternoon at the headquarters of the presidential guard mechanized unit. The meeting was held to mark the 74th anniversary of the country's independence. [passage omitted]

Esteemed Professor Rabbani delivered a very wise speech on the 74th anniversary of the country's independence. He said: Once again, I congratulate you all, staff of our Islamic Army and our courageous and heroic nation, on the occasion of the 74th anniversary of the restoration of independence. Throughout history, our nation has fought heroically against every superpower and every filthy hand which has been extended to our Islamic soil. It has allowed no occupier or aggressor to remain in Afghanistan. Our free and heroic nation has safeguarded, and will safeguard forever, its freedom and territorial integrity at the price of the blood of its courageous sons.

The esteemed president added: Through the mercy of Almighty God and the courage of the faithful children of the country, an Islamic state has been declared today and our Islamic Army is in the making. No aggressor would have the strength to attack the territory of our country as an aggressor and occupier. [passage omitted]

Bangladesh

Bombs Explode in Dhaka Before Opposition Rally

BK2008045093 Hong Kong AFP in English 0355 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] Dhaka, Aug 19 (AFP)—A series bomb blasts rocked the Bangladeshi capital ahead of a rally of the main opposition Awami League (AL) Friday [20 August], leaving at least two people injured, police and press reports said.

An office boy of the mass circulation Bengali-language DAILY ITTEFAQ newspaper was injured when homemade bombs blasted its downtown office late Thursday, newspaper officials said Friday.

The BANGLAR BANI newspaper, which supports the AL, was bombed for the second time Thursday, the publishers said, adding that police were guarding its offices. It was also bombed Wednesday, but caused no injuries.

Meanwhile, Dhaka police have banned the carrying of arms, explosives and sticks because "law and order was being obstructed by the carrying of sticks and other harmful articles in processions and gatherings in the city."

The DAILY JANAKANTHA newspaper said at least seven more bombings were reported across the city late Thursday and one man was injured when a petrol pump was bombed near the venue of AL's rally.

The AL is protesting alleged corruption by some government ministers and repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance, which exempts from trial the leaders of the 1975 coup in which Bangladesh's founding president, Mujibur Rahman, and most of his family were killed and his post-independence AL-government was toppled.

Tension mounted after the right-wing Nationalist Democratic Alliance announced Monday they would also hold a rally Friday at the same venue.

India

Rao Stresses 'Self-Reliance' in Space Program

BK1808163493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 18 Aug 93

[Text] The prime minister has asserted that the Indian satellite and space program will go ahead despite the slight setback in the cryogenic engine deal with Russia. Replying to a day-long discussion on the calling-attention motion on the deal in the Rajya Sabha today, Mr. Narasimha Rao categorically stated that India will not compromise on anything which goes against the country's interest. Referring to India's future satellite programs, he said INSAT-2C, 2D, and 2E will be launched during the middle of 1995, 1996, and the end of 1997. Global tenders have been received from China, USA, France, and Russia for the purpose. He also made it clear that the setback in the cryogenic engine deal will have no bearing on our future negotiations with Russia. He said, though there are clauses in the 1991 agreement with Russia which can be invoked to protect our interests, we will not do anything which will slow down bilateral cooperation.

The prime minister said he had made it clear to the USA that their laws were not universal and could not be imposed on us. Referring to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], the prime minister said any regime has to be universal and non-discriminatory. We do not favor anything which has unequal components. He said NPT is due for review next year, and India is continuing its dialogue with the United States on the issue. Admitting that there has been arm twisting by the developed countries, he said new strategies are needed in the context of new developments. New Delhi is developing a program of cooperation among the developing countries.

Earlier in a statement, the prime minister reiterated India's commitment to achieving self-reliance in high technologies, particularly in areas like space, having a major bearing in our economic and social development. He said, though Russia has expressed its inability to fulfill its obligations through a non- paper—a non-official communication—he said it is wrong to assume that the agreement does not exist. He said Russia has expressed its readiness to hold further consultations on the issue.

Initiating the debate, Mr. N.E. Balram, CPI [Communist Party of India], said the issue involves India's relations not only with Russia but also with the United States. During the debate, members stressed the need for self-reliance and cautioned against pressures and arm twisting. They also demanded a review in India's foreign policy in view of the changed global situation.

Iran

Larijani Says U.S. Behavior on PRC Ship Threatens Peace

NC1908142393 Paris AFP in English 1331 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Tehran, Aug 19 (AFP)—A top Iranian official said Thursday [19 August] that Washington's behavior toward a Chinese vessel seeking entry to the Gulf threatened international peace and stability.

"The world should not see Washington's act solely as an expression of its policy of confrontation with Iran," said Mohammad Javad Larijani, the vice-chairman of the Iranian parliament's foreign policy subcommittee.

"America's behavior consists of dangerous abnormalities which threaten international peace and stability," he said.

Larijani, who is also a member of Iran's National Security Council, called on the world community to pay "serious attention to this important event".

Chinese officials have accused the United States of obstructing one of its ships, the Yinhe, which U.S. officials charge is trying to take chemical weapon elements to Iran.

China, which denies the allegations, said the Yinhe was destined for the United Arab Emirates port of Dubayy with some containers for Iran.

Washington has denied it had threatened the freighter or obstructed its passage, but said it would keep watch to prevent the export of banned substances and wants to inspect its cargo.

Talks With Afghan Delegation Review Bilateral Ties

Hekmatyar, Rafsanjani Discuss 'Cooperation'

LD1908115493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Prime Minister of Afghanistan Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar met President Hashemi-Rafsanjani in

Tehran this morning. During the meeting, Mr. Hekmatyar presented a report about the latest political and social situation in Afghanistan. He also expressed the hope that the people of the Afghan nation, following the lengthy period of confronting the occupiers and eventually achieving victory over them, would engage themselves in reconstructing the ruins caused by that period, amid an atmosphere of peace and tranquility.

Expressing his gratitude for the Islamic Republic of Iran's humanitarian support for the Afghan nation's struggles, he considered the process of progress in that country's affairs and programs to be positive. He said: We seek the further expansion of relations and fields of cooperation with our neighbor and friend, Iran. We believe that the formation of a joint commission by the two countries can act as a good start and accelerate the process of bilateral cooperation.

In the meeting, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani stated that the establishment of complete security and stability in Afghanistan depends on solidarity and cooperation among all jihadi groups in that country.

In other remarks, the president referred to the point that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always favored an independent and united Afghanistan, and that it has always supported such a state. He said: We do not consider ourselves as separate from the Afghan nation. We would like to assist the people of that nation, who are united and harmonious in their efforts toward promoting and developing their country. We would like this assistance to be used for reconstructing the damage and ruin left by the war in that country.

Moreover, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressed the creation of unity and Islamic fraternity among all Afghan jihadi groups. He then welcomed the expansion of widespread cooperation in technical and industrial fields and in building roads and other transportation facilities linking the two countries.

Hekmatyar Meets Habibi, Asks for Aid

LD1908121493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] In today's meeting between Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar, the prime minister of Afghanistan, and Mr. Hasan Habibi, first vice president, they exchanged views about the latest developments in Afghanistan, bilateral relations, and important regional issues.

In this meeting, referring to the all-around support of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the people of Afghanistan, the prime minister of Afghanistan called for Iran's assistance and the transfer of Iran's expertise for the reconstruction of his country. Describing the situation in Afghanistan as reassuring, Mr. Hekmatyar said: It is only through the complete unity of all mojahedin forces that security will be established in Afghanistan.

Referring to the close and friendly relations between the two countries, Mr. Habibi said: The Islamic Republic of Iran, as in the past, will not refrain from supporting the Muslim Afghan nation. The first vice president of the country, stressing that any further clashes between Mojahedin forces should be prevented, added: By maintaining their unity and solidarity, the mojahedin forces should help in the reconstruction of their country. The first vice president also expressed the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to transfer Iranian expertise in the field of soil and irrigation, agricultural programs—including changing poppy fields to other useful products—repairing roads and feeder roads [minor roads linking villages to main roads], oil and gas production in the north of Afghanistan, and offering scholarships to students. He added: The construction jihad is ready to start its activities in various fields of the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Mr. Habibi also said that the dear Afghan refugees who lived in their second home Iran for many years, should return to their homes with good memories [khatere-ye khosh; this could also be a mis-reading of khater-e khosh, which means willingly or voluntarily] to reconstruct their country.

In the meeting between the prime minister of Afghanistan with the first vice president of our country, they reached an agreement for the formation of a joint commission and the cancellation of diplomatic and service visas between the two countries.

Hekmatyar Interviewed

LD1908162193 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1430 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar of Afghanistan has described his talks with officials of our country as constructive and useful. In an interview with our correspondent, Mr. Hekmatyar, who is in Tehran today, referred to his meetings with the president and the first vice president. He said: In our discussions we came to the conclusion that the Islamic Republic of Iran can have the most constructive role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Stressing the extent of the destruction in Afghanistan during 14 years of war and conflict, he expressed his hope that Iran's practical role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan will become clearer in the future than in the past.

On the forthcoming elections in Afghanistan, Mr. Hekmatyar stated: On the basis of the Jalalabad agreement, the elections will be held before the end of the next solar month [beginning 23 August; date as heard] and those elections will be supervised by delegations from Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Nations.

Concerning the return of Afghan refugees from Iran to their country, the Afghan prime minister said:

[Begin Hekmatyar recording] We have had some discussions on the process of the return of the refugees to their

country. Some agreements have been reached, and the issues raised by the Afghan side have been taken into consideration. It is hoped that the tripartite agreement among Afghanistan, Iran, and the United Nations in connection with the return of the refugees will be seriously implemented, the necessary facilities will be provided, the complaints raised by the refugees will be dealt with in such a way that the refugees are able to return to their country before the start of the winter cold, and the appropriate and necessary conditions for their return will be present. [end recording]

Repatriation Minister Meets Besharati

LD1908191593 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1430 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Dr. Firuz Azam, Afghanistan's repatriation minister, met with Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati this afternoon. At the meeting, Afghanistan's repatriation minister—expressing his thanks for the assistance and hospitality provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran for Afghan refugees during 14 years of war and jihad by that country—expressed his hope that, with the assistance of the Iranian Government, the issue of the repatriation of the refugees to Afghanistan will be implemented in the best possible way.

For his part, Mr. Besharati said: The Islamic Republic of Iran is a refuge for all the Muslims of the world, and that includes our Afghan refugee brothers. However, now that—thanks be to God—the Muslim Afghan nation has been saved from the tyranny and oppression of the communists ruling over that country and an Islamic government has been established there, we hope that the Afghan refugees, by returning to their country, will work for the reconstruction and development of their country.

The interior minister also called for the two countries' common borders to be controlled in order to prevent the smuggling of narcotics to Iran. He also urged the Afghan Government to confront the narcotics smugglers. In this connection he proposed the setting up of a joint commission, which was approved by the Afghan side.

Hekmatyar Denies Holding POW's

LD1908185993 Tehran IRNA in English 1521 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Tehran. Aug. 19, IRNA—Visiting Afghan Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar said here Thursday [19 August] that his country was not holding any prisoners of war from Russia and Kazakhstan.

The Afghan Government does not intend to allow even a round of ammunition to be taken out of Afghanistan, Hekmatyar said in response to a question on U.S. pressure on Kabul to return American-made Stinger anti-aircraft missile launchers.

The Afghan premier made the remarks in an interview with the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC NEWS AGENCY (IRNA) and the Islamic Republic of Iran's Broadcasting (IRIB).

Hekmatyar, who arrived here Wednesday on a 4-day visit, conferred with President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and First Vice President Hasan Habibi in separate meetings Thursday. He denied Western media allegations that Muslim activists from other countries were being trained in bases inside Afghanistan.

On presidential elections due to be held in Afghanistan in October, the Afghan prime minister voiced his opposition to U.N. intervention in the election and said "we only want the U.N. to despatch an envoy to act as observor so as to ensure that there will be no rigging in the presidential polls."

On the crisis in Tajikistan, Hekmatyar made it clear that the crisis would be solved only through a consensus between the ruling Tajik Administration and opposition groups.

He proposed that a transitional government acceptable to both sides come to power in Tajikistan to lay the foundation of their future government and to pave the way for free elections.

Hekmatyar warned Russia to immediately withdraw its forces from the Afghan-Tajik border and not repeat the blunder it made during 14 years of its occupation of Afghanistan.

On reasons for delays in freeing Russian war prisoners captured in Afghanistan during its 14 year long conflict with the former Soviet Union, he blamed the delays on developments in Tajikistan and on Russia's "savage" attacks on the Afghan border.

Arsala, Velayati Confer on Tajikistan

NC2008075793 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] Afghan Foreign Minister Hedayat Amin Arsala met Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati in Tehran last night and discussed the insecurity on the Tajik-Afghan borders in detail.

During the meeting, the two sides stressed that the only path to a realistic solution to establish peace, stability, and security in the region is through negotiations among warring sides and a guarantee of security for the people of Tajikistan. The latest developments in the crisis in the Caucasus and the aggression by Armenia against Azerbaijan were assessed.

Dr. Velayati explained that developments in the two major acts of aggression in the region prove that eventually all aggression is repulsed, and internationally

recognized borders are confirmed. The Armenian aggression against Azerbaijani territory will also encounter the same fate, he said.

During the meeting, the foreign ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan discussed ways to broaden bilateral relations in various economic and consular fields.

Hekmatyar Views Anti-Muslim 'Conspiracies'

LD2008104493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar of Afghanistan, currently in Iran, was today's speaker before the Friday prayers sermons in Tehran.

In his speech, he thanked the people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their support and assistance to the people of Afghanistan, and he reviewed the struggle of the people of Afghanistan in the course of the Russian occupation and afterward during the struggle against foreign acts of interference.

Referring to conspiracies of global arrogance designed to create difficulties in the Islamic world, the prime minister of Afghanistan said: A brief glance at world crisis centers shows that Muslims are the victims of wars in the world today; no doubt these wars have been imposed on Muslims in accordance with a predesigned plan designed to prevent the progress, development, and independence of the Muslim countries and the Islamic ummah.

In conclusion, referring to the situation in his country, the prime minister of Afghanistan said: The situation in my country is improving, and in the future we will witness a stable and powerful country next to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Commentary Views Hekmatyar's Visit

NC1908204793 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Commentary by News Commentaries Group]

[Text] Afghanistan's elected Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar arrived in Tehran as part of his tour to neighboring friendly countries. This is the Afghan prime minister's first visit abroad since assuming office.

Hekmatyar's visit to neighboring friendly Muslim countries is an indication of the fact that these countries enjoy a special position in Kabul's diplomacy. Relations between Iran and Afghanistan date back centuries and this bond was further deepened in the past 14 years, during which the Afghan nation has been embroiled in war and concomitant hardships that still persist.

Religion, history, and culture comprise the common denominators between the Iranian and Afghan nations and serve to consolidate bilateral relations. During the course of the war between the people of Afghanistan and the communist system ruling over them, Iran considered it its religious duty to support the rightful struggle of the Muslim Afghan people and provided them with immense assistance.

After the communist system in Afghanistan collapsed and civil strife erupted among rival factions, the Islamic government of Iran concentrated all its efforts to resolve differences through negotiations. Iran constantly stressed that war cannot resolve differences that should be resolved amicably.

Because the civil war has ended and peace and stability have been established in Islamic Afghanistan, Iran considers it its duty to assist Afghanistan in reconstruction. Iran has always favored Afghanistan's unity, solidarity, and territorial integrity. While stressing the policy of nonintervention in the internal affairs of other countries, Iran considers cooperation and coordination with friendly Muslim countries part of the principles making up its foreign policy.

Islamic Iran wants a stable and strong Afghanistan in the region. Therefore, it is eager to provide unstinting assistance for its reconstruction. Economic cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan is increasing daily. Joint commercial companies, new branches of Iranian banks in Kabul, and transit agreements represent the economic cooperation between the two countries. In addition, Afghanistan's entry into the Economic Cooperation Organization has paved the way for further broadening mutual relations.

Cultural cooperation is based on science and education, news and publications, and art. Textbook and film exchanges, newly established news agency offices, cultural representation missions, teacher exchanges, and educational stipends for students are examples of cultural cooperation.

Political experts believe that Hekmatyar's arrival in Iran will open a new chapter in Tehran-Kabul ties and will boost relations more than ever. In the field of international cooperation, these two countries have an identical stance. Combating foreign domination and supporting the oppressed Muslims in various parts of the world constitute the common principles@in their respective foreign policies.

Kuwaiti Parliamentary Speaker Holds Talks

Meets With Hashemi-Rafsanjani

LD1908155693 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1430 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani this morning received Kuwaiti Parliamentary Speaker Ahmed 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Sa'dun.

During the meeting, the Kuwaiti parliamentary speaker, while congratulating the presidential reelection of Mr.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and while presenting the message from the Kuwaiti amir regarding the renewed invitation of our country's president to visit Kuwait said: On behalf of the Kuwaiti people, we express utmost gratitude toward the Iranian people and government.

He said: These emotions are due to the sincere and Islamic stance of the Iranian Government regarding Kuwait during the period of occupation.

He added: Even though Kuwait was not alongside your country during Iraq's war against Iran, during the occupation of Kuwait, Iran took a principled Islamic stance, defended justice, and came—with particular speed—to help Kuwait in extinguishing its burning oil wells.

The Kuwaiti parliamentary speaker added: Security in the region would be impossible without Iran's participation and cooperation with other regional countries. With help from Iran and other regional countries, we will be able to create a security system, because a country as large and as powerful as Iran has an effective role in providing peace for the region.

Then, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said: The Islamic Republic of Iran has always opposed aggression and violence in the region and the world, and on this basis—and at the time of the occupation of Kuwait—while condemning the aggressor, it supported Kuwait. Immediately after the end of the aggression, it helped Kuwait to extinguish the oil well fires with the aim of breaking the monopoly of foreign companies and speeding the process of extinguishing the fires.

Stating that Iran had a policy of good-neighbor relations, expansion of friendly relations, as well as bilateral cooperation with neighboring and regional countries, the president said: Regional countries must always be aware of enemies' designs in creating grounds for divisions and differences between Muslim countries—in particular between Iran and regional countries—and they should be careful, regarding these designs with awareness and wisdom, and should not be influenced by the suggestions of those with a malicious nature who wish to achieve their own sinister interests.

Stating that one of the more favorable grounds of cooperation between the countries of the region was oil and commitment to OPEC policies, the president said: We hope that you and us, as well as other Islamic countries, will be able to move—with wisdom, awareness, and maturity—toward safeguarding the interests of the Islamic ummah.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani also said: The Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to help regional countries, in particular Kuwait, in any area they wish, and as a friendly country, who wishes for the tranquillity and progress of the countries of the region, we welcome expanding relations.

Views Regional Ties With Velayati

LD19081743Ø3 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] The speaker of the Kuwaiti Parliament met with Foreign Affairs Minister Velayati this afternoon. At the meeting the Kuwaiti parliamentary speaker described Mr. Velayati's recent visit to Kuwait and other Persian Gulf littoral states as being the basis for a new and positive development in the bilateral relations between Iran and the countries of the region.

Mr. Velayati expressed the readiness of our country to strenghten and expand relations with Kuwait and other neighboring countries in the Persian Gulf region. He said: Security in the Persian Gulf should be based on cooperation among the countries of the region. The presence of foreigners will in no way help the establishment of real and lasting peace in the region.

Concerning the issue of the price of oil, Mr. Velayati said: Sincere OPEC cooperation is in the interest of all the member countries. Inordinate [kharej az gha'ede] production will weaken OPEC and will be against the interest of all the member countries.

Confers With Rowhani

LD1908184893 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Today, the speaker of Kuwait's parliament met with Mr. Hasan Rowhani, deputy Majles speaker. In this meeting Mr. Rowhani, expressing his pleasure at the liberation of Kuwait and the construction work which has been carried out in that country, said: In the same way that the occupation of a part of our country was bitter to us, the occupation of Kuwait was also unpleasant to us, to the same extent. That was why we were the first country to condemn the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and why we expressed our readiness to become involved in the reconstruction of that country.

He added: By overlooking the stance adopted by Kuwait against Iran during the Iraqi aggression against our country, we hope that these bitter experiences will lead to the establishment of friendly and fraternal relations in the region and that these relations will be based on trust, sincerity, and friendship.

In another part of his remarks, Rowhani, who is also secretary of the Supreme Security Council, referred to the trivial [nachiz] defense budget of the Islamic Republic of Iran compared to that of the small countries of the region. He also mentioned the raising of minor issues by some Persian Gulf littoral states, and said: We do not believe that the raising of the issue of the islands [Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa] is in the interest of any of the countries of the region. On the contrary, we believe that it is only in the interest of the enemies of the region.

Stating the clear position of the Islamic Republic of Iran toward the Zionist regime, Mr. Rowhani described any political, economic, or commercial relations with that regime as being against the interests of the Islamic world.

At the meeting, the speaker of Kuwait's parliament, expressing his appreciation for the principled position of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the occupation of Kuwait, stressed the need to solve all the difficulties existing among the Persian Gulf littoral states through discussion and talks. The speaker of Kuwait's parliament also expressed his hope that the Government of the United Arab Emirates would not refer the minor issue of the islands to the Arab League and the United Nations, but would put an end to this issue through direct talks with the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Va'ezi, Uzbek President Discuss Central Asia, Caucasus

LD2008104393 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 20 Aug 93

[Text] The latest developments in the Caucasus and Central Asia were discussed in a meeting between our country's deputy foreign minister [Mahmud Va'ezi] and the Uzbek president in Tashkent. During the meeting, the two sides, expressing concern over the movements of the Armenian Army on the territory of the Azerbaijan republic, called for a halt to military operations and for endeavors to come to a political settlement of the dispute.

On the crisis in Tajikistan, the two sides rejected military solutions and stressed the need for negotiations and a political settlement. Uzbek President Islam Karimov, said: The expansion of military operations will offer a pretext for major powers to return to the region. He called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to utilize its influence and political credit in the region, and to assist the Caucasian and Central Asian republics in resolving their disputes and problems.

Iraqi 'Disinformation' Campaign on POW's Criticized

LD1908034793 Tehran IRNA in English 0238 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Text] Tehran, Aug. 19, IRNA—TEHRAN TIMES today criticized the Iraqi regime's campaign of disinformation and denied having quoted Majles vice-speaker, Hojjat ol-Eslam Dr. Hasan Rowhani, as saying that Iran held 20,000 Iraqi prisoners of war. The daily rejected the allegation made on August 16 by "an unnamed Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesman" that there were 20,000 Iraqi POWs held by Iran.

"The fact is that the TEHRAN TIMES' report was not based on what Dr. Rowhani said. The report in the daily referred to figures that the Iraqi regime used to claim," admitted TEHRAN TIMES. "The original interview with Dr. Rowhani was published in the TEHRAN TIMES on May 20. The deputy Majles speaker was never quoted as saying that Iran had 20,000 Iraqi prisoners of war," it said.

"Despite a clear explanation by TEHRAN TIMES in its May 23 issue the Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesman again misquoted Dr. Rowhani, which means Baghdad still wants to continue its inhuman policy on the issue of the prisoners of war," TEHRAN TIMES quoted "a social activist" as telling the daily.

It summed up the POW issue as "purely humanitarian" and said Baghdad was trying to exploit this sensitive issue for its own political ends. "Contrary to various previous claims, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesman on Monday declared his country had no Iranian prisoners of war."

[In its 23 May issue, Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English carries on page one the following "correction":

["In the interview with Dr. Hasan Rowhani, Majles Deputy Speaker, which appeared in TEHRAN TIMES on Thursday [20 May] there is a misquotation regarding the number of the Iraqi POW's in Iran. This is a mistake on the part of our reporter, which was verified after review of the tape-recording of the interview.

["Dr. Rowhani had stated that if the Iraqi government was ready to release the 5000 Iranian POW's which we know are still in captivity in Iraq, then Iran would be ready to release the remaining Iraqi POW's. The error is regretted. Editor"]

Pakistan

Prime Minister Details New Economic Package

BK1908185093 Islamabad PTV Television Network in Urdu 1638 GMT 19 Aug 93

[Speech by Prime Minister Moin Qureshi on 19 August; place and date not given—live or recorded; Qureshi speaks in English]

[Text] My fellow countrymen, Assalamu Alaikum [Peace be upon you]. It is one month since I was given the mandate as prime minister to guide Pakistan's affairs until an elected government could take office. It is time for me to give you a report on the state of the nation, the progress we have made so far in discharging my mandate, and the actions my government proposes to take in the period that remains before elections. A (?cue) responsibility of my government is to create the condition in which free and fair elections can be held on the scheduled date.

The Election Commission has already announced a broad framework of rules for holding the elections. Some additional rules regarding the eligibility of candidates for election and the rules of conduct are under consideration and will soon be announced. For example, we would like to ensure that persons who have obtained substantial amounts of loans from government institutions and

thereafter have either got them written off or defaulted on them, do repay the loans or make them current before being allowed to contest elections. I firmly believe that before a person is allowed to spend money toward his own elections, he should be made to repay his obligations to the government. It is inevitable that whatever rules and criteria we establish will not please everybody because they will affect different political groups in different ways. I want to assure you, however, that together with the Election Commission, we are looking at these issues with total impartiality. Let me also reaffirm again, so that there is not a shadow of doubt in anyone's mind, that we will hold elections on October 6th and 9th as previously agreed. We are also encouraging foreign observers to be present during elections in order to see for themselves that my commitment to hold free and fair elections has indeed been carried out.

In terms of my responsibilities as prime minister, there is nothing more important for me than to make completely sure that our beloved country is, and will always remain, safe and secure. During the last month, I have received extensive briefings from the Air Force, the Army, the Navy on Pakistan's security and defense situation. I am happy to report to you that while Pakistan wishes to achieve and maintain the friendliest possible relations with all countries within the region and outside, it has the full capability to insure its own security and to repulse any form of external threat or aggression. Pakistan's military expenditure is only a small fraction of some of our neighbors', and this year, we have reduced military expenditure in real terms. But the morale, the discipline, and sense of commitment of our Armed Forces is very high, and it will serve as an example for other segments of our society.

Let me turn now to the state of our economy. In my August 14 speech, I promised the nation that my government will present a comprehensive program of economic and social reforms. The implementation of this program has already begun and will continue during the tenure of my government. Its main purpose is to launch an attack on poverty, to remove social ills that afflict the society, and to create conditions for achieving sustained long-term development. Its purpose is to give to the people what they deserve and what they have been denied for so long. Pakistan is rich in its potential resources, and its people have boundless energy in creativity. With a right direction and stability, Pakistan can very quickly become what Qaid-i-Azam [Mohammad Ali Jinnah, father of the nation] had envisioned in a modern and prosperous Islamic country.

What I present to you now is a balanced program of reforms. It has been thought out with great care. It will produce both immediate results and initiate long-term change.

I want to offer this program in four parts. First, the measures we have introduced to improve the financial health of the economy. Second, redefinition of the role of the government. Third, the measures we are adopting to initiate long-delayed structural change. Fourth, steps to restore health to the social order. The deep malice from which our society and economy suffers today is not the result of the action of one administration. It is the cumulative consequence of both the actions and the inaction on the part of the governments over the last two decades. Moreover, during the last few months, the political uncertainty and confusion contributed to building up a serious financial crisis. When my government took office, I was deeply concerned to discover that we did not even have the financial resources to pay for the essential imports we need and meet our day-to-day financial obligations. Our exports were declining. Government expenditure was running far above available resources. We were borrowing heavily and at a high cost to meet our domestic and foreign obligations. The government faced the clear prospects of a complete breakdown in its trade and financial relations. Internally, there was a real threat of rampant inflation. A number of our agreements with foreign financial agencies that provide capital for critical imports were in jeopardy. Under these circumstances, I could have taken the easy way out as some have suggested.

I could have said that this is a caretaker government, and its principal mandate is to organize elections, and it does not have to deal with the economic crisis which faces the country. However, no responsible government could sit by and see the country drift into financial insolvency. And I would not be true to my oath of office, if I did not do all that I could to put the economy back on the right track. Under the circumstances, we had no alternative but to take some immediate remedial action, including, for example, an adjustment in the exchange rate. We had to suspend new expenditures on some major programs such as the yellow taxi scheme and the tamir-i-watan [nation building] program. We had to move urgently to get the budgetary and foreign exchange situation under control. The economic situation has improved over the last month. But we cannot afford to sit still. We must take effective action to strengthen the health of the economy. My government will not be able, during its very short timeframe, to restore full health to the economy. But, it will leave a legacy on which the elected government can build and achieve a full recovery. We are fully prepared to take the politically tough decisions that we believe are necessary to put Pakistan back on the road to prosperity.

I have complete faith in our people, who are patriotic and hard working, and I know that they will cooperate and work with the government in executing this program, provided they see that it is fair and equitable to all segments of society. I wish to assure you that while every Pakistani will be called upon to make sacrifices, we shall make every effort to see that the poor are protected as far as possible and the burden of our program falls on the shoulders of those who are most able to bear it. Moreover, we shall make every effort to reward those who are making a constructive contribution to society and take strong punitive action against those who do not pay taxes, who misuse public assets, or indulge in antisocial activities.

A key area of our reforms is that of resource generation. We need additional funds to finance the legitimate functions of government. My government is determined to reform the tax administration. It will ensure that corrupt officials are punished, that the grievances of the people against the tax authorities are addressed quickly, and that an environment of confidence is created which encourages the people to pay to the government what they owe.

All segments of society need to make the fair contribution to government revenues. Agriculuture is the largest and the most dynamic part of our economy. And, at the present time, those who have only agricultural assets do not adequately share in the burden of taxation. We will apply the wealth tax to agricultural holdings with a generous exemption limit. But, they will be assessed closer to the market value. In addition, the provincial governments will introduce a tax on agricultural income at the rate of two rupees per production index unit. Those who own land, which produces output equivalent to less than 4,000 production index units, will be exempt from the agricultural tax. The tax will be collected through the land revenue system, and its receipts will accrue to the provinces. I want to emphasize to you that, at these exemption limits, only the more affluent land owners will be subject to these agricultural taxes.

The public sector also generates resources by charging user fees for the services provided by the utility such as WAPDA [Water and Power Development Authority] and the gas companies. These agencies are providing poor service. One reason for this is inefficiency and dishonesty—two attributes that are taking a heavy social and economic toll. The other reason is their inability to generate resources from within to improve and enlarge their operations. We have already announced new electric power and gas tariffs that will improve the resource base of the utilities.

My government is taking the following additional actions to improve the performance of public utilities.

We will be taking punitive actions against those who don't pay their bills in time and/or steal the products the utilities produce. We will institute the procedures to ensure that the management and the functionaries in these organizations do not cheat and harass their customers.

We will invite the private sector to bring more investment capital into public utilities and to improve their management practice.

Finally, as a part of my government's effort to reform tax administration, we are beginning the process of documenting economic transactions. Without documents, the tax administration cannot proceed with efficiency, and without proper documents the taxpayer cannot protect himself against arbitrary or unscrupulous behavior on the part of the tax authority. The Government will shortly issue an order that will determine and prescribe conditions under which payments should be paid by checks.

Turning now to government expenditure. My administration has taken a careful look at the existing pipeline of projects and developed a higher priority for investment program for which we must allocate resources in the national interest. We have, however, decided to eliminate or postpone the implementation of a number of expensive projects that have become a major burden on our resource situation. By contrast, we are channeling additional resources to speed the implemention of the Social Action Plan—that is a subject which I will return to in a moment.

I am conscious of the fact that some of the changes in the utility charges and in the prices of goods and services will impose a burden on the poor and the middle class. We are taking measures to provide relief to the poor. These include increase in the salaries of government employees by 100 rupees in the scale of one to 16, increase of 100 rupees in the minimum wage, and a reduction in import duty on sugar which should lower its price.

Our program of reforms also includes steps to protect the soundness of money. In most mature economies, an autonomous central bank, free from political control, ensures that the creation of new money keeps in step with the production of goods and services. We have adopted measures to turn the state bank into an efficient and independent central bank, which is in conformity with the original vision that Qaid-i-Azam [Mohammad Ali Jinnah] had for it.

These are then the measures aimed at resolving immediately and urgently some of the economic problems that need to be addressed. We also need the infusion of foreign capital into the economy. I am glad to report that the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have agreed to support our reform program with substantial additional resources. It should be absolutely clear, however, that the reforms that we are undertaking are dictated solely by our needs and our national interest. They go well beyond the issues that we have discussed with the World Bank and the IMF.

Over the last 20 years, we invited the government to move into areas of activities which were better left to private initiative and enterprise. Previous governments had already begun to reverse this trend. My government will move even more decisively to launch an expanded program of privatization, which will expedite the sale of public assets that remain with the government. The program will also invite the participation of the private sector in most other sectors of the economy—in public utilities, insurance, investment in commercial banking, roads and railways, ports, and airline operations. The proceeds to be obtained from the sale of these public assets should be used with great prudence. They will be used first and foremost to reduce the massive burden of public debt.

We have established a debt retirement fund for this purpose.

The Privatization Commission has been reconstituted under the chairmanship of Mr. A.G.M. Qazi. It will

include people of known integrity and conduct its operations with total openness and transparency. We shall invite the World Bank and reputable auditing firms to review the privatization process and program and provide full information to the general public on all the transactions that are conducted.

Besides from reducing the role of the government, we also want to ensure that it works with greater economy, efficiency, and honesty. I have already directed that our inactive foreign missions be closed down, that the number of ministries and departments be reduced, and that duplication in the work of government departments be eliminated. However, my purpose is to improve the government's working. We will not allow any disruption to occur. The adjustments to be made in the size of the government must avoid undue hardships and will be judiciously phased over a period of time.

I must emphasize to you that the management of public assets is a trust given by the people to the government. The state must not be run as a jagir [estate] with its resources available to be dispensed at the will and whim of the rulers. I am issuing a policy which will establish strict rules for the allotment of plots and other public assets. It will eliminate all discretionary quotas for prime ministers, for ministers, and for other authorities. In future, all such grants will be made by independent boards, transparently and in accordance with established criteria.

I have also decided to establish a commission on urban land policy which will develop transparent rules and regulations for the acquisition and disposition of urban land as municipalities and cantonments expand their boundaries. I am setting up an administrative tribunal under the chairmanship of retired Justice Samdhani. It will examine the cases of government servants where suspicion exists of corruption and other forms of unwarranted behavior. The tribunal will try to complete its task as far as possible by the end of the tenure of the caretaker administration.

Some of the problems I have already listed are the consequence of the way the structure of the economy has evolved. Largely on account of the pressure yielded by powerful vested interests, we have been postponing strucural change. In this regard, my government is taking a number of measures that will have a profound long-term impact on the economy. We are committing ourselves to an overhaul of the tariff structure over the next three years, with a view to bringing down maximum tariffs to a range within 35 percent to 50 percent. Apart from the decisions already taken in the 1993-94 budget, no further tariff changes will be made this year. We will, however, maintain very high tariffs on items of luxury and ostentatious consumption. A committee under the chairmanship of Commerce Minister Hafiz Pasha will study in-depth the impact of the tariff adjustments on the structure of our industry and the composition of imports. It will also complete its task before the end of our tenure.

We are also taking steps to improve and stimulate agricultural production. Our main aim is to commercialize agriculture, provide the price incentive to move toward higher-valued output. We are taking the steps to free the trade in fertilizers and to provide a new price package for wheat and oil seeds. These crops are well-suited to our conditions and the price increase should stimulate production and eliminate imports. We are increasing the procurement price of wheat from 130 rupees to 150 rupees for a bag of 40 kg. We are increasing the price of vegetable ghee [oil] by three rupees per kg.

One other important consequence of this package of reforms would be to reduce the incentives for smuggling to neighboring countries. Today, we spend the equivalent of $1 billion of our precious foreign exchange to place goods and commodities in the hands of smugglers.

Let me turn now to an area which also needs the government's careful attention. Nothing affects the common man more than a breakdown in social order. Today the common man suffers a great deal, and he suffers in silence. He does not receive adequate protection from the state for his life and property. Lack of safe drinking water, absence of adequate sanitation, and frequent breakdown in the supply of electricity cause the common man great hardships. His physical environment also continues to worsen. Our cities are amongst the most polluted in the world. We are rapidly losing the cover of forests. He does not have easy recourse to the law. If he turns to courts, he has to wait for years before his grievances are redressed. Women suffer the most. Pakistan is one of those rare countries in the world in which women have a shorter life span than men. What can we do to change this situation?

It is my expectation that the new power and gas tariff structure will help us to improve the level of investment in the utilities. The induction of private sector will also help improve the delivery of services in the urban areas. We must build our local bodies into institutions that are truly responsive to the needs of the people. We must provide them with adequate financial resources. We are working with provincial governments to improve the tax base in large cities by undertaking pilot projects for the survey and valuation of urban property. A similar initiative will be taken in Islamabad.

In order to speed up the judicial process, I have constituted a commission under the chairmanship of Chief Justice of Supreme Court Dr. Nasim Hassan Shah. The commission will submit its report to me by 15 September.

We badly need a social security system in our country through which lower- and middle-class workers can assure themselves of an old-age pension and health and unemployment insurance cover. I am appointing a task force under the chairmanship of Mr. Nasim Mirza to develop a plan of action in this area. The access to this program of social security will be on a voluntary basis and the private sector will be invited to play an active part.

To provide poor people with basic needs, the previous government had formulated a social action program. I am providing increased resources for the implementation of this program. The social action program is aimed at providing better health facilities for the urban poor, in particular that of poor children. It will also improve the quality of primary education, increase the proportion of children attending schools, and create an environment for reducing the dropout rate of girls from schools. It also includes a comprehensive population welfare program which is a target of providing 100 percent coverage to the urban population and 70 percent to those in the countryside over the next five years.

To save our physical environment from irreparable damage, my government is providing additional resources for the implementation of the national environment strategy. This strategy encompasses a period of 10 years and will be implemented at a total cost of 19 billion rupees over that period. Its main thrust is to reduce the level of urban pollution, to manage urban waste, to increase the area under forests, and to stop the indiscriminate felling of trees. I will not compromise on issues of environmental preservation. We owe it to our children that we do not leave them with a polluted environment.

But there are also other things that need to be done urgently. I am extremely concerned for the way we continue to neglect our cultural heritage. I have constituted a fund for the protection of cultural heritage. I invite the private sector to contribute generously to the fund. The fund's resources will be used in particular for the restoration of our archaeological treasures.

Finally, I want to talk about a problem that will destroy the very root of our society if we don't take urgent and determined actions. I refer here to the spread of narcotics. Some 2 to 3 million Pakistanis are estimated to be now affected by the spread of drugs. We can no longer shrug this off as a problem that afflicts the Western societies. It is now our problem. My government is initiating serious efforts to prosecute drug traffickers. We are launching a massive drive to control the spread of drugs, eradicate the production of crops that go into the production of drugs, prosecute those that are involved in drug trafficking, and ultimately eliminate this spreading cancer from our society.

I want to conclude with a personal message. When I was first asked to become prime minister, I was reluctant to accept the mandate, in part due to health considerations, but, importantly, because I was not sure that I was worthy of the faith that was being reposed in me. I eventually accepted because I felt that it was a unique opportunity to serve my country at a very difficult time in its history. I have more than three decades of experience in international organizations of dealing with the problems of developing countries all over the world. My experience tells me that the problems Pakistan faces today can be successfully overcome if we are prepared to address them honestly and with a sense of national purpose.

The program I have announced today is not easy, but it is essential if we are to get back on the road to economic recovery prosperity. I need your support for its implementation. My government will do everything in its power to implement a substantial part of the program during its tenure in office. If the next elected government stays on the course on which we are setting out today, I have every reason to believe that Pakistan will achieve the rank of a prosperous middle-income country by the close of this century.

My fellow countrymen, a few weeks from today you will go to the polls to choose your representatives. I pray to Allah that you will exercise your precious right with prudence. You have every right to demand good government from your representatives. I hope you will vote for those people who will fulfill that expectation.

May God bless you all. Good-bye.

Finance Ministry Not Considering Rupee Devaluation

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[Text] The Finance Ministry's attention has been drawn to certain press reports speculating a reduction in the exchange rate of the rupee. The Finance Ministry has stated that no such move is under consideration.